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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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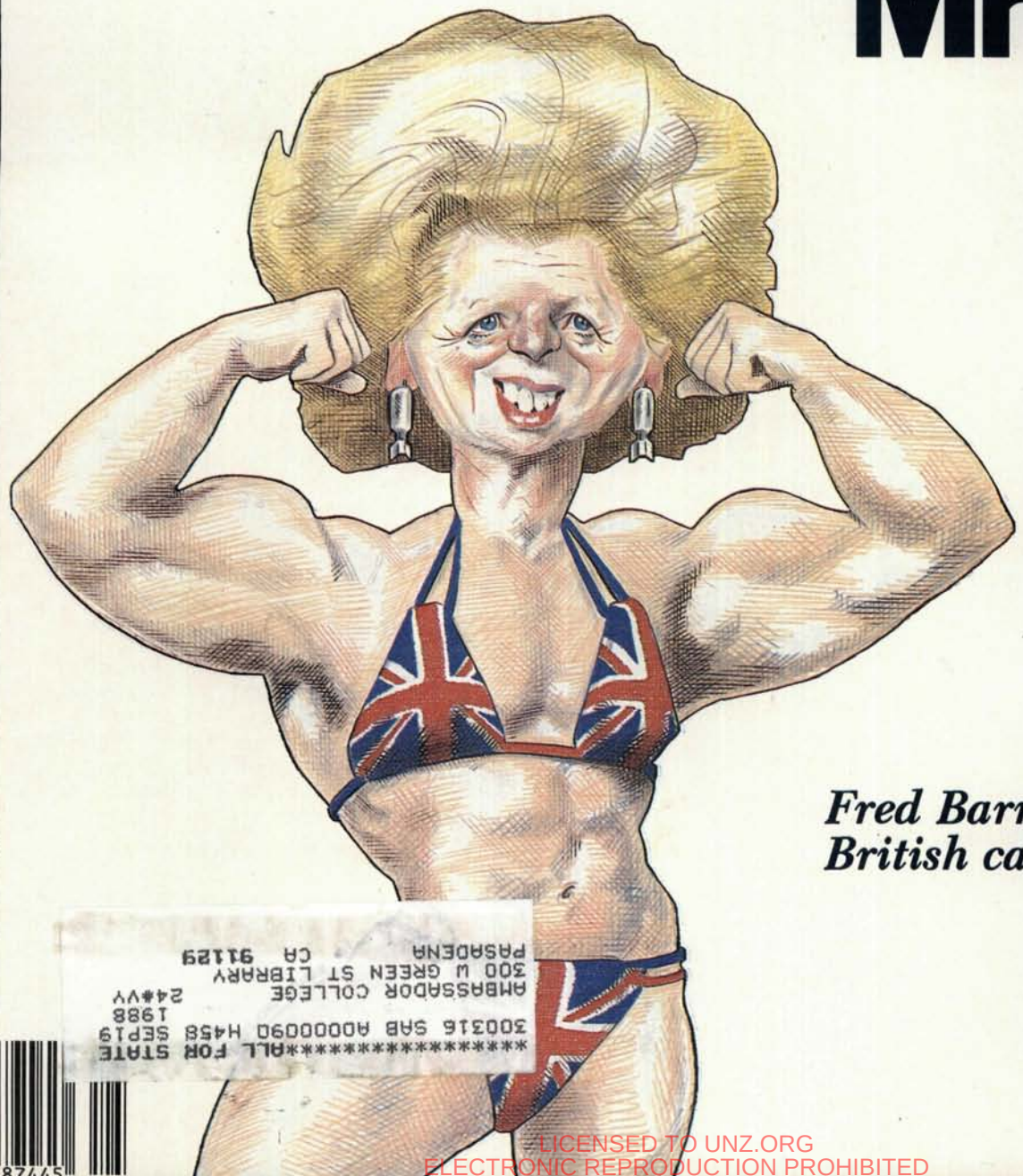

Fred Barnes on the British campaign trail

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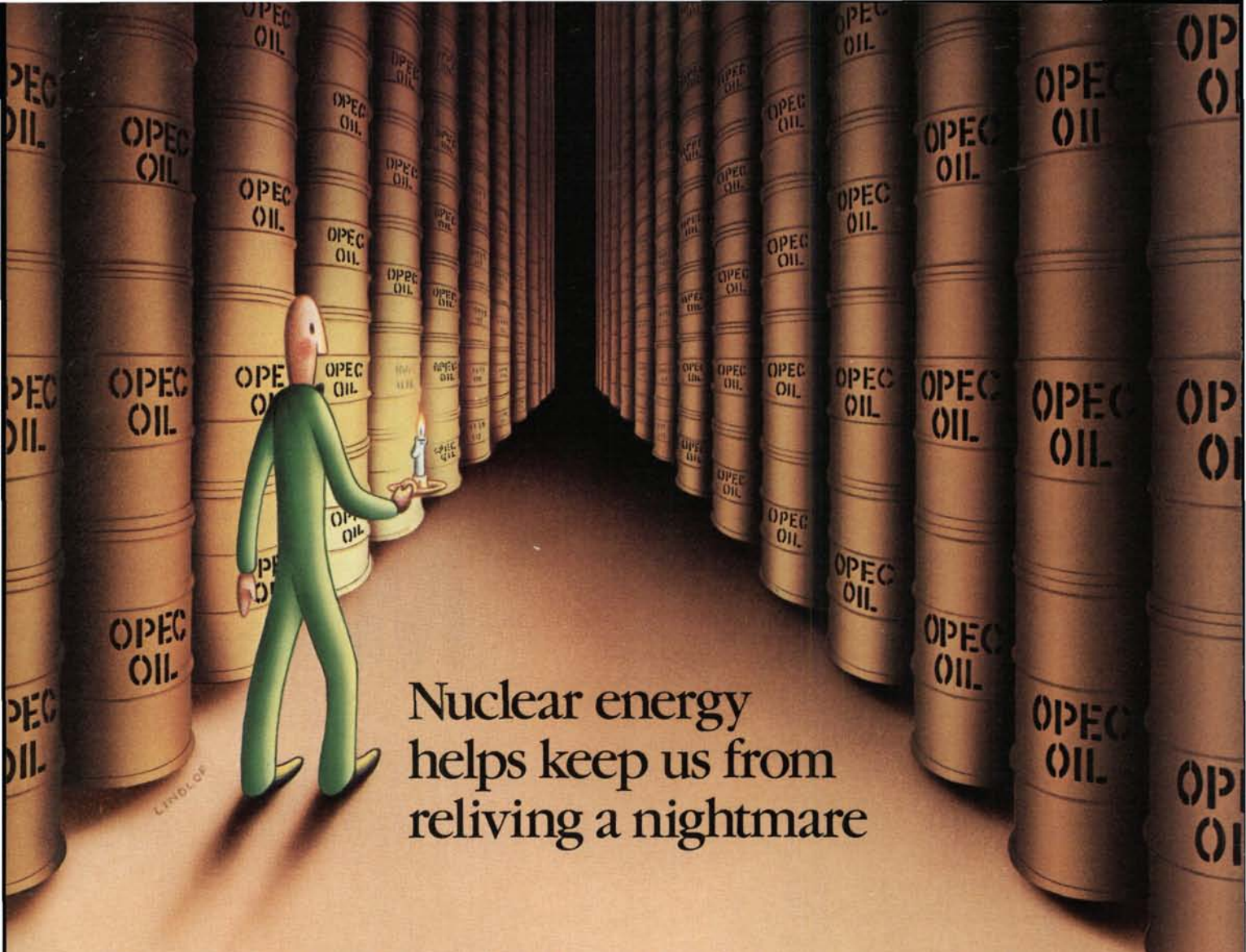

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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4 **TRB FROM WASHINGTON** ..... SHRINKING VIOLETS
Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party.

6 **CORRESPONDENCE** ..... Examining doctors, regulation, Allan Bloom, &c.

7 **THE EDITORS** ..... HOW TO DEFEND THE GULF
Reagan should cool the anti-Iran rhetoric and steel U.S. defenses.

8 **CHARLES PAUL FREUND** ..... THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

9 **ROBERT BAZELL** ..... SCIENCE AND SOCIETY: QUARK BARREL POLITICS
Ronald Reagan and Ken Stabler give us a gigantic physics boondoggle.

11 **MICHAEL ARONSON** ..... WASHINGTON SCENE: THE BANQUET BEAT
TNR's food editor eats for free for a week.

12 **TIM GOLDEN** ..... DUARTE'S LAST STAND
Hopes for democracy fade in El Salvador.

14 **JEFFREY L. PASLEY** ..... TWISTED SISTERS
The foreign policy of Bayonne, New Jersey.

18 **MICHAEL MASSING** ..... TROTSKY'S ORPHANS
Marxists lurk in the Reagan administration.

22 **FRED BARNES** ..... BRITAIN'S CHEESY CAMPAIGN
This year's election will turn on stuffed animals, demagoguery, and lots of TV ads.

26 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ..... ON FILMS: THE BAD OLD DAYS
The Untouchables is a classy restyling.

27 **EDWARD ROTHSTEIN** ..... ON MUSIC: THE MUSIC MAN
The virtuoso as nihilist in Joan Peyser's *Bernstein*.

29 **ADAM GOPNIK** ..... COMICS AND CATASTROPHE
The true history of the cartoon and the meaning of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*.

34 **DAVID CANNADINE** ..... THE IMPOTENCE OF BEING EARNEST
Richard Cobden: A Victorian Outsider by Wendy Hinde

36 **ALFRED CORN** ..... A BRIDGE TOO FAR
The Poems of Hart Crane edited by Marc Simon

38 **BENJAMIN IVRY** ..... POEM *What Time Does A Chinaman Go To The Dentist?*

39 **DONALD JAMESON** ..... WHAT YEVGENY KNEW
Yevtushenko's tale of the shower.

42 **WASHINGTON DIARIST** ..... BAD IDEAS

COVER by Taylor Jones for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 22.

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FROM WASHINGTON

Shrinking Violets

Bill Bradley declines to run for president because his "internal clock" tells him he isn't ready yet, and "you've got to listen to the internal clock." Mario Cuomo declines to run for president because, well, just because. Sam Nunn declines to run for president because it would conflict with his duties as a senator. Dale Bumpers declines to run for president because he doesn't want to disrupt his family life.

It's the year of the shrinking violets. In the first presidential election campaign with no incumbent in almost three decades, the most promising Democrats all declare that their dance cards are full. What's more, the louder they insist they're not interested, the louder is the clamor for them to change their minds. Their very unavailability adds to their appeal. This is not just because forbidden fruit tastes sweeter in the mind, but because of a widespread sense that there is something noble, dignified, inspiring—something downright presidential—about not wanting to run for president.

Commentators wax rhapsodic about Bradley's humility, Cuomo's high-mindedness, Nunn's devotion to duty. On the Republican side, Howard Baker's presidential campaign was going nowhere until his withdrawal to become White House chief of staff made him a great patriot and statesman. Writing 12 years ago in the *Washington Monthly*, Walter Shapiro called this "the myth of the White Knight." It's the belief that "anyone who is willing to run for president is temperamentally unsuited for the job," whereas the "perfect presidential candidate [is] just waiting in the wings, far too sensitive to declare himself and come right out on stage."

There is a non-candidate for every taste. The demurral that disappoints me the most is Bradley's. His views on issues are much to my liking, and yet he is wildly admired by people whose views are not to my liking at all. He is a serious person who overcomes that handicap by having been a basketball star. Honest, reflective, liberal, electable: an enticing combination. But this "internal clock" malarkey makes him less enticing, not more so.

No one is obligated to run for president, of course, and it's easy enough to see why anyone sensible wouldn't want to be president, let alone run for it. All of this year's non-candidates are sincere in their lack of interest, I think, and not just engaged in a baroque campaign ploy. But Bradley, at least, clearly *does* want to be president—just not yet. Cuomo also clearly wants to be president, but he has tied himself into so many knots with moral posturing that he can't stand up straight and ask for it. Nunn is on a respect high in the Senate, and isn't sure he wants to come down.

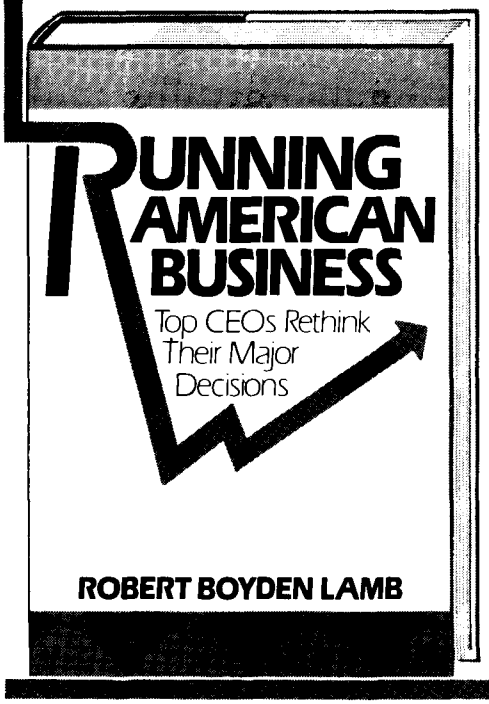
I'm sorry, this won't do. Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party. Bradley may be ready in 1992 or 1996, but his party needs him in 1988. In 1992 either there will be a Democratic incumbent or the Republicans will have won five of the past six presidential elections. Now is the Democrats' best opportunity in years—possibly their best opportunity for years to come—and Bradley is the Democrats' best hope. Cuomo also would probably be a stronger candidate than most in the current field.

Both Bradley and Cuomo get a lot of credit for knowing what they stand for—for being in politics to serve long-held ideas and values, not just personal ambition. As the *Wall Street Journal* put it recently, Bradley, unlike most of the announced Democratic contenders (and, I would add, the announced Republicans, too), "didn't decide he should be president and then go window-shopping for a set of ideas appropriate to the office." The best chance for Democratic values, rather than Republican values, to guide the nation for the coming years is for Bradley to run. What does it say about his alleged commitment to these values, or Cuomo's, that these gentlemen would rather preen on their personality quirks than help their party recapture the White House?

Modesty is appealing, of course, and so is the myth of Cincinnatus—the man

continued on page 41

Robert B. Reich salutes a different kind of management book:



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CORRESPONDENCE

EXAMINING THE DOCTOR

To the editors:

I agree that "fee-for-service" reforms could lead to better health care and reduced cost if fee schedules were designed to encourage performance of more "cognitive" services (such as preventive medicine and consultations) rather than expensive medical procedures ("In a Doctor's Wallet" by Robert A. Berenson, May 18). But physicians remain overpaid for patient-care services and often provide low-quality cognitive services. Some who bill their insurance companies for in-hospital visits have relied on intern, resident, and nursing progress notes to make their clinical evaluation. They may spend five minutes at the bedside and not perform a full clinical examination or re-evaluation. The patient, however, can expect an outrageous bill.

The quality of patient care might be better improved if fee-for-service reforms included a more comprehensive cognitive service payment plan that paid nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, psychologists, social workers, biochemists, and other allied health care professionals who are also the patient advocate and provider. They do not receive "any financial incentive to work for high ratings of patient satisfaction or for meeting recommended standards of preventive medicine," yet they provide much of the quality patient-care services and do medical research on behalf of preventive medicine.

SHARON FEDERATION, R.N., M.N.
Los Angeles, California

WRONG ON REGULATION

To the editors:

In "Re-Regulation Rag" (May 18), TNR appears to be inviting the regulators back into American businesses, neighborhoods, and homes. Unfortunately, regulated industries frequently have influence over their regulators. In *Free to Choose*, Milton and Rose Friedman describe the history of the Interstate Commerce Commission, an example that shows how difficult it is to keep government regulators from being manipulated by special interests. Regulations don't solve problems in and of themselves any more than the drug laws have solved drug abuse. They do create a self-perpetuating bureaucracy, cause inefficiency in whatever they're regulating, and waste tax dollars.

The editorial implies that health and safety problems may be addressed by regulation. But fortunately there are other alternatives. The first is litigation: those responsible for property damage, injury, or death should be held responsible in court. This would penalize only the guilty; regulation penalizes all potential violators. Second, unions are and should be concerned about the safety of their members; regulatory agencies would not be as motivated to protect workers. And those who benefit (the workers) are precisely those who pay (with union dues). Finally, we as individuals must take responsibility for our own health and safety. No amount of government paternalism can relieve us of this responsibility.

DAVID BURNS
Austin, Texas

ROOKIE MISTAKE

To the editors:

I have no idea how good Reds outfielder Eric Davis will ultimately prove. But his exploits on the playing field seem to have befuddled at least some already. In the June 1 Zeitgeist Checklist, Charles Paul Freund appeared to label Mr. Davis as a "rookie phenom." The Reds sensation played last year too.

MARC KORNBLATT
Bloomington, Indiana

RELATIVISM IN BLOOM

To the editors:

Louis Menand claims with respect to students and relativism that "no one" really believes in it, "least of all college students" ("Mr. Bloom's Planet," May 25). While I don't doubt that he induces correctly given his own experience with college undergraduates, his sample base must have been incredibly skewed. Although Allan Bloom speaks from his experience in elite academic institutions, my own modest experience with a state university compellingly confirms his thesis as against Menand's claim. The fact is that undergraduates are overwhelmingly committed to relativism—at least when abstracted from a scarce few fashionable political opinions. "Judge not" is the overarching watchword among the vast number of my peers and near peers. The ease with which so many argumentatively collapse into the final, generic rejoinder "Well, who are *you* to judge," as if it were a meaningful response, is enough to take one's breath away. While working on the student newspaper for the past three years, I've observed that journalism students are far and away the most prejudiced set of undergraduates, all the while bleating, in sheepish accord, that infinite tolerance opens the mind. To become depressed about the state of the undergraduate mind, simply sit in a political theory class for a couple of weeks as I did early this semester. One can't help but come away struck by the shallowness of thought and the profound homogeneity of perspective.

JAMES R. ROGERS
Lincoln, Nebraska

THE KING PAPERS

To the editors:

I should like to invite your readers' participation in the publication of the definitive edition of the Martin Luther King Papers. The King Papers, which will be published in 12 volumes under the editorship of Stanford University historian Clayborne Carson, will be the most comprehensive collection of the publications, sermons, speeches, correspondence, photographs, and other documents relating to Martin's role in the civil rights movement. The editors would be grateful to receive original documents or copies of original documents for possible inclusion in the King Papers. For further information, please write: Dr. Clayborne Carson, c/o The Martin Luther King Center, 449 Auburn Avenue, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia, 30312 or call: Dr. Ralph E. Luker (404) 526-8982 or Dr. Lillian Ashcraft Eason (404) 526-8984.

Many thanks for your help.

CORETTA SCOTT KING
Atlanta, Georgia

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JUNE 22, 1987

HOW TO DEFEND THE GULF

The Reagan administration richly deserves all the suspicion Congress is expressing about our latest venture into harm's way, this time in the Persian Gulf. Practically every military enterprise by the United States back to the Vietnam War has been botched in whole or in part. The Reagan administration commendably has tried to demonstrate to adversaries and allies that the United States is not afraid to use force sometimes to protect its interests. Unfortunately, its pattern has been to deploy first and plan afterward. Reagan's record includes a humiliating withdrawal from Lebanon, a messy victory in tiny Grenada, a constitutional confrontation over Nicaragua, and political disaster in the Iran arms sales caper. The air raid on Libya was a success, but even it was marred by unnecessary strikes on civilian targets.

Now the United States has lost 37 seamen aboard the *USS Stark* as a result of an accidental Iraqi air attack in the Gulf. The Pentagon is seeking to blame the ship's skipper for not acting swiftly enough to avoid attack, but Congress has every right and responsibility to ask why, after so much money has been spent on new and heavier ships and sophisticated defenses, the vessel was so vulnerable to grievous harm.

One American failure threatens to give rise to the next. Thanks to the Iran arms sale, the Gulf Arabs trust the administration just about as much as Congress does. To them it looked as though the United States was tilting toward Iran in its war against their ally Iraq. They are legitimately terrified that if Iran wins, Muslim fanaticism will sweep the region. Kuwait, whose ships have come under increasing attack from Iran in the past year, came to the U.S. for protection and reassurance last December, just after the Iran sale became public. When the U.S. failed to respond, they turned to the Soviets. Then the administration, eager to counter Soviet influence, leapt to provide aid. If the Soviets would lend their flag to three Kuwaiti tankers, we'd give ours to 11, and furnish armed escort, too.

The administration rightly points out that this was one operation it wasn't hiding from Congress. Beginning in March, all the appropriate leaders of both houses and their staffs were offered briefings on the Gulf plans. Most of the leaders were too busy, and their staffs treated the operation as routine. The attack on the *Stark* suddenly alerted Congress to its responsibility to oversee the conduct of foreign policy. The Senate briefly overreacted by passing an amendment forbidding the administration to protect Kuwaiti ships until it had reported to Congress on its contingency plans. But an agreement was reached: the administration *will* report within seven days, prior to commencing expanded operations, and Congress will forbid nothing. The requirement to report to Congress should ensure that the administration has thought through what precautions it will take against possible Iranian attack, and what it will do if attacked.

Assuming that plans are carefully laid, flagging and escorting the Kuwaiti ships is something the United States must do. And Congress should give neither the Arabs nor Iran reason to think that threats or attacks will split the United States and force an eventual Lebanon-style withdrawal. Vital Western interests are at stake in the Gulf, which is why the United States has had ships on regular patrol there since 1949, and why we gradually took over as principal guarantor of the region's security after Britain withdrew from east of Suez in 1971. The Soviets now have been invited by one of our allies to play a small part in the region's defense. To commit ourselves to carry out our responsibility as a great power and then shirk it would be an invitation for the Soviets to move in more aggressively and perhaps emerge eventually as the region's dominant power. The Gulf, the principal source of the oil that fuels the industrial West, is one of the world's greatest economic and strategic prizes, one the Russians have sought for centuries. It's unthinkable to hand it to them because a frigate got hit by a misguided missile.

Most politicians in both parties understand how important the Gulf is. But some don't. In the 1984 presidential campaign, for example, Gary Hart called for an end to U.S. defense of the region, declaring that "not one drop of American blood should be spilt for somebody else's oil." Walter Mondale fought him stoutly on that issue in the Democratic Platform Committee, and won. As Mondale's representatives argued, "someone else's oil" means ours, even if indirectly. Six percent of U.S. oil comes from the Gulf (versus half for Europe and 60 percent for Japan), but a cutoff would be economically disastrous for us all, and

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domination of the region by the Soviets would be geopolitically disastrous. The president ought to try at the Venice economic summit to get Europe to join in and Japan to help pay for Gulf protection, but there can be no pretense that this is a condition of our continued presence there.

Will the flagging of Kuwaiti ships increase the risk that the United States will go to war with Iran? Undoubtedly it will, but conflict is by no means inevitable. Throughout the Iran-Iraq war, the United States routinely has had six warships in the Gulf, and until the *Stark* not one of them and no merchantman had been hit by either side. In fact, Iran apparently has been meticulous about avoiding contact with U.S. ships, and has been careful to identify the shipping it has attacked. The same obviously cannot be said about Iraq, which has struck 223 ships compared with Iran's 93. So far, too, Iran has not employed regular navy ships or air force planes to carry out attacks on shipping, only Revolutionary Guards using helicopters and patrol boats armed with rockets.

Administration officials say that through diplomatic channels in Switzerland and elsewhere the United States has told the Iranians that it wants to avoid conflict in the future. At the same time, though, Reagan has been undermining the diplomacy by unleashing defiant anti-Iranian rhetoric. He knows very well how detested Iran is in America, and undoubtedly wants to recoup his lost poll ratings at its expense. He may even hope that Iran will come after a U.S. vessel, so he can give Khomeini the Qaddafi treatment. He is unquestionably throwing down challenges to Iranian leaders, and they have been responding with rhetoric of their own—threatening to throw the United States out of the Gulf as we were thrown out of Lebanon.

The president should stop inflaming the situation, and make it clear that the United States aims to protect neutral shipping, not help Iraq in the war. Inevitably, we are tilting in Iraq's direction by helping Kuwait, Iraq's ally and Iran's enemy. Administration officials claim, though, that we will not fly our flag over Kuwaiti ships carrying any goods

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart
1.	AT SEA	1	3
2.	WORLD WITHOUT END, AMEN	4	21
3.	HEROES FOR OUR TIME	2	27
4.	OH GOD, PART TWO	*	4
5.	CHINA IS NEAR	*	6
6.	DON'T PROCESS	—	1
7.	OH TO BE AN ENGLAND	*	2
8.	WING AND A PRAYER	*	2
9.	CHEWING TOBACCO	*	6
10.	BIG WHEELS	—	1

1. AT SEA

The Stark. Post-*Stark* Gulf "policy" has devolved into the most incoherent naval mess since the British warship *Victoria* was sunk by its sister ship *Camperdown* in the late 19th century. What does it mean to wrap the Kuwaitis in the U.S. flag? Are we sending a message? To whom—the Soviets? Are we prepared to defend our own ships? How? Maybe this could all be worked out at Reykjavik.

2. WORLD WITHOUT END, AMEN

AIDS. The testing vs. privacy issue has become paramount here (ZC, June 8), but meanwhile U.S. observers seem to have been struck by the fact that AIDS is everywhere, and there is an increasing sense that somebody should do something, especially since countries, like France, with lower AIDS rates have better-developed public policies than we do.

3. HEROES FOR OUR TIME

Iranamok. There is evidence, as the hearings plod along, that patriotic grandstanding on the part of some witnesses is paying off. They've developed fans who support their forthright action in the face of congressional wimpishness. This may not be surprising, but it highlights the failure of Congress to delineate and then pursue the issues that brought the hearings about in the first place.

4. OH GOD, PART TWO

Televangelism. Now that the Bakkers have had their say, critics of TV preachers are once again speculating that their world is ending. But all it really means is that more members of this subculture will militantly sport their Jesus First pins. Air-conditioned doghouse or not, PTL's "partners" in TV-land have already come through for Falwell.

5. CHINA IS NEAR

Glasnost. The public appearance of a Russian right wing, combining historic preservation and anti-Semitism, brings the *glasnost* story to a remarkable stage. Combined with reports of more rumbling critics within the Party, and skeptical polls, *glasnost* appears to invite comparison with China's various efforts at liberalization, from the Hundred Flowers campaign to this year's Chinese fizzle.

6. DON'T PROCESS

Preventive detention. The Supreme Court's startling preventive detention decision has raised fears that the tenet of innocent until proven guilty, among the culture's most cherished, has been abandoned. The status quo ante may indeed have often been fiction, but the pretense of civil liberties was present. Now legal circumstances have wholly changed. Happy birthday, Constitution.

7. OH TO BE AN ENGLAND

Britainization. U.S. industrialists now stand accused of not putting to use such new materials as improved ceramics and plastics, and contenting themselves with old methods and materials. Though the nation may be maintaining its research lead, its ability to commercialize new products is seen as faltering.

8. WING AND A PRAYER

Air safety. Summer vacation season has brought airline safety and scheduling back to page one. Unhappily, without a recent tragedy to impel the story, it lacks passion. Who really cares about those guys with briefcases sitting on runways waiting for flight clearance? The fact is, most people are afraid of planes, and their fear has little to do with how many of them might be in the air together.

9. CHEWING TOBACCO

Smoking. Social pressure against public smoking has become intense enough for tobacco companies to try something new. Latest up is a tobacco-based chewing gum, for "Where There's No Smoking." Meanwhile, joining tobacco in cigarette vending machines are condoms packaged in cigarette boxes, "for your privacy and safety."

10. BIG WHEELS

Cars. Gas prices may be rising, but, hey, so what? Lincoln and Cadillac are engaged in a mind-boggling "mine's bigger" TV ad competition, while numerous car makes that succeeded here because of their economy are going upscale. Toyota and Honda are among five "little" cars that will seek to compete with Mercedes and BMW.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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(military or otherwise) to Iraq. Iran ought to know about that pledge. Still, Iran wants to be the dominant power in the Gulf. It does not like either U.S. or Soviet interference. It may sense from U.S. debate the same internal weakness that made us vulnerable in Lebanon, and so it may test our resolve by attacking something of value to us—if not a ship, then perhaps an embassy or a barracks.

At a minimum, the administration must be sure of the security of all U.S. facilities and personnel in the region. It can't guarantee that U.S. ships won't be attacked or sunk, but it ought to do everything possible to provide them with the best protection that U.S. defense billions have bought. Among other things, it's time for Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Oman to give landing rights to U.S. fighter planes if they are needed to provide air cover for the Gulf. If the Saudis refuse, Congress is fully justified in withholding approval for the F-15 aircraft and air-to-ground missiles they want to buy. Congress should not expect the administration publicly to declare exactly what it will do if Iran attacks a U.S. target. As Reagan says, the Iranians should be left to worry about that. But the administration should know what it wants to hit—Silkworm missile stations under construction around the Straits of Hormuz ought to be a prime target—and congressional leaders should be informed about the plans.

The United States also must work harder to bring peace to the area. In fact, the administration has been working to obtain approval of a U.N. Security Council resolution designed to impose mandatory economic sanctions on parties (that is, Iran) that refuse to negotiate a settlement. The resolution also calls for a tribunal to fix blame for starting the war (on Iraq) and determine compensation for losses (which are catastrophic on both sides). And in what may seem an ironic touch, the U.S.-backed resolution calls for an arms embargo to both sides in the conflict. Critics of the Reagan administration certainly will guffaw at that, given the stupidity of the arms-for-hostages trade. But however justified, distrust of the administration's judgment should not lead Congress to force America to abandon the Gulf to the Iranians and the Soviets. The Gulf was vital when Harry Truman was president, and it will continue to be long after Reagan is gone.

Science And Society

Quark Barrel Politics

IN THE HALLS of Congress and state legislatures there is an intense interest these days in high-energy physics. Soon Congress must decide whether to spend $4 billion or more to build the administration's proposed superconducting super collider, and if the SSC is approved, the administration must choose a site. Several states want it badly. The machine would explore the subatomic world populated by such things as quarks and gluons. Few of those involved in the current discussions know or care much about quarks or gluons. They are concerned with traditional pork barrel bucks and a curious notion of how the government should invest in scientific research to stimulate economic growth.

High-energy physics, or particle physics, is the study of the constituents of matter. Since World War II this discipline has won a large, many say far too large, portion of the federal government's research budget. The SSC would continue the tradition. The Congressional Research Service estimates it would take up at least two-and-a-half percent of the civilian R&D budget through 1996, obviously at the expense of other science. The historical reasons for congressional generosity to the particle physicists are clear. They made the atom bomb, and after the war they had far more power in the government than other scientists.

Over the years the power of the particle physicists has faded. Many thought the government wouldn't spend heavily for bigger machines that produce only arcane data for physicists. Approval of the SSC confounded the skeptics. The most powerful accelerator now operating, Fermilab, west of Chicago, is a four-mile-long circle. SSC would be 52 miles long, about the size of the Beltway around Washington.

One man, a particle physicist of course, engineered the administration's backing of the gigantic project. Dr. Alvin Trivelpiece was until recently director of research in the Energy Department. He first persuaded his boss, Energy Secretary John Herrington, to support the project. Herrington is a former California prosecuting attorney who has a close relationship with President Reagan. At a Domestic Policy Council meeting on January 29 Trivelpiece presented the president and council members with the physicists' case for the giant accelerator, then others offered the budgetary arguments against it. Reagan decided to approve it. According to *Physics Today*, he announced his decision with a convoluted story involving writer Jack London and professional football quarterback Ken Stabler. Reagan said Stabler had once been asked to interpret a poem of London's. He then pulled a card from his pocket and read the poem, including the stanza: "I would rather be a superb meteor/ Every atom of me in magnificent glow/Than a sleepy and permanent planet." According to Reagan, Stabler concluded that the poem meant "throw deep." Reagan then told Herrington to "throw deep," and thus approved the most expensive civilian research project in history.

It is important to understand what the SSC will and will not accomplish. Ninety years ago physicists thought the world was made up of only 92 building blocks, the atoms of every known element. Of course, it was not that simple. In 1897 the electron was discovered, in 1919 the proton, and in 1931 researchers found the neutron. The atom had subunits. The study of those subunits and how they interact led to modern-day electronics as well as nuclear energy. It is the backbone of much of modern technology.

But the pure research interest of many physicists, especially those who had led the Manhattan Project, was to

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find if there were parts even tinier than the proton, neutron, and electron. To search for them, the physicists had to build "atom smashers," particle accelerators. In the accelerators, protons or electrons are blown apart. In the debris, the physicists find the tinier subunits.

When particle physics moved from observing nature to atom smashing, there was a fundamental change. It entered an area that has nothing to do with the everyday world. The particles generated by current accelerators and those that would be produced in the SSC exist for a billionth of a second or less. If they ever occurred in nature, it was only in the first instant of the "big bang" of creation.

It is highly unlikely that these studies will yield practical applications in the foreseeable future. That fact often was misunderstood or ignored as Congress paid for bigger and bigger accelerators in the past, and it seems to be missing from much of the debate about the SSC. Indeed, one of the major parts of the administration's case for the SSC is that it will offer practical payoffs, that it will improve American industrial competitiveness.

A Department of Energy press release issued last February declared: "Past investments in studies of the interior of atoms have been repaid hundreds of times over in terms of new knowledge, new technologies, new jobs, national security, advances in medicine, and financial returns to the Treasury." That view is hardly universal. Dr. James Krumhansl, professor of physics at Cornell and vice president of the American Physical Society, wrote in a letter to Energy Secretary Herrington: "In the last 30 years I have not seen that particle physics has made any substantive contribution to technology generally, nor energy science and technology specifically. The proposed project will not be different. This investment will do nothing, either, to improve our scientific, technological, or industrial competitiveness."

Another of the administration's arguments for the SSC is that it will not cost us so much because other governments will pay for part of it. The newsletter *Science and Government Report* recently printed a long list of sharply contradictory statements by administration officials on the prospects for money from other governments. The prospects are bleak. Many physicists from Great Britain, France, and Germany who have been cooperating with American researchers have found themselves suddenly excluded because of security constraints imposed as SDI research has grown. Foreign governments are not likely to contribute to any American physics research effort.

One of the biggest forces pushing the SSC is that states are fighting harder for it than they would for most projects of that size. The 4,500 construction jobs created over an eight- to nine-year period and the permanent work force of 2,500 joined by 500 visiting scientists would certainly be worth having. But states lust after the SSC because of a widespread hope that the project will spawn a new region of high technology, low-polluting industry, the economic salvation that practically every state seeks. That is not likely to happen. Silicon Valley grew near Stanford and Route 128 near MIT and Harvard because research at those institutions created opportunities for quick commercial applications by new, small firms. The research carried out on a giant accelerator can be done only on the accelerator. There will be no high-tech venture capital companies set up to search for quarks.

IRONICALLY, the area of physics that is most likely to produce the next generation of Silicon Valleys offers one of the strongest arguments against building the SSC, at least now. In recent months researchers have made spectacular achievements in the field of superconductivity. This is the phenomenon in which some materials when cooled to very low temperatures conduct electricity with little or no resistance.

The SSC, as it name implies, would employ superconductivity. Its huge magnets would be cooled to allow more electricity to pass. The magnets would thus be much more powerful, accelerating the particles with more force. But the SSC would employ "old-fashioned" superconductivity. Its gigantic magnets would be cooled to temperatures close to absolute zero, about minus 450 degrees Fahrenheit, a formidable engineering project over 52 miles.

What is new in superconductivity is that scientists are finding how to create it at higher temperatures, with less difficulty and expense. These discoveries will almost certainly lead to commercial applications in areas from electronics to transportation to medicine. They are also likely to render the SSC obsolete before it is finished. It is possible that in ten years the same machine might be built for a fraction of the price or a much more powerful machine for the same price. So far the physicists supporting the SSC and their friends in the administration have resisted delaying the project because of the progress in superconductivity. They fear that any loss of momentum will be permanent, and they are eager to get on with their research.

There is no denying the importance of that research—as an intellectual construct. With the SSC the physicists hope to prove or disprove theories connecting the various forces of nature, and ultimately develop a theory that would explain them all. With the SSC the physicists hope to see more of the particles that were present at the instant of creation and thus understand more about the universe. These are complex and elegant studies that will tell us more about our world. Someday they could have enormous practical application. But that day, if it ever comes, is far off. The SSC, despite the hyperbole, is for pure research, and some areas of research are a lot more expensive than others. Some are more likely than others to improve our lives.

The list of scientific projects that could benefit from some of that money is endless. If we truly are interested in improving our industrial competitiveness, for example, we might consider ways of improving the awful science education in many schools. Perhaps American taxpayers want the SSC. But the taxpayers should know what they are buying and how much it costs.

ROBERT BAZELL

Robert Bazell is the science correspondent for NBC News.

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WASHINGTON SCENE

THE BANQUET BEAT

OF THE SEVEN capital cities represented at the Venice summit, Tokyo and London have financial power but terrible food. Rome and Paris have great chefs but no power. Ottawa has neither, and Bonn—well, who goes out to dinner in Bonn? That leaves Washington. The power question is easy, and as for food, I recently spent a week investigating the Washington banquet circuit. The plan was to go undercover as TNR's food editor and use the power of the press credential to eat for free for a week while getting the inside story on the banquet beat. I planned my schedule randomly, using items from the newspaper, AP's daybook (a listing of events around Washington), and a list of conventions from the Washington Convention and Visitors Association.

Monday. I'm in the ballroom of the Washington Hilton with around 1,800 people, including about 40 U.S. senators and 70 representatives. The occasion is the Annual Policy Conference Banquet of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the pro-Israel lobby that many consider the most ruthless and effective lobby in the country. The press office has seated me next to a pollster from Joliet, Illinois.

The first course is a salad, with no choice of dressings, so I go for the rolls. The main course is chicken kiev (kosher), rice pilaf, and a vegetable medley, which I consume as the man from Joliet tells me about his sampling techniques. The food is fine, though the portions are a little skimpy. Dessert is an tasteless raspberry sorbet. Finally the program starts. Three AIPAC officials make short speeches on the great success of the past year in U.S.-Israeli relations and expressing hopes for an even better coming year. Then the main event: back-to-back speeches by Senators Sam Nunn and John McCain. Both say that there have been some great successes in U.S.-Israeli relations during the past year and that they expect an even better coming year. I'm still hungry.

After dinner I have my choice of seven simultaneous receptions in seven adjacent meeting rooms, one each for four senators and three presidential candidates. The best is Bruce Babbitt's because of both the good food and small crowd. Plus Babbitt actually answered the tough questions thrown at him—Arab arm sales, Pollard case, location of U.S. Embassy—without help from any aides. Food rating: 5 (out of 10). Interest: 5. Price: $75.

Tuesday. I'm back at the Washington Hilton for a fund-raising black-tie dinner for Representative Silvio Conte, Republican of Massachusetts. The dinner is the kickoff event to endow a chair in Conte's name at the University of Massachusetts. I'm in coat and tie, since renting a tuxedo would have violated my ground rules. I go to the men's room to kill some time. It is adorned with flowers, various toiletries, including shaving gear, shampoo, and Right Guard (in case I needed a quick shower), a few candy dishes, and an attendant. For AIPAC's dinner the previous night, this same men's room had no toiletries, candy, or attendant.

The predinner remarks are delivered by Vice President Bush, who then quickly leaves. At the press table are myself, one other reporter, and eight empty chairs. Soon the waiters come by and present each guest with a little scroll. I untie the ribbon and gaze at six outtakes from a photo session of Silvio and Corinne Conte—a worthy keepsake.

The first course is a plate with three dainty shrimp, two slivers of some green vegetable, and a pinkish sauce, which I avoid. I have four knives—shrimp, salad, dinner, and butter, and I have to keep reminding myself which is which. The rolls are the same as the night before, but they have forgotten the butter. I ask for some, and two waiters hurry over; they keep on bringing out butter through the succeeding courses. Our eight phantom colleagues are served as hyperefficiently as we are. We try to explain that no one else is coming, but the waiters insist on placing each course at the vacant place settings. The entrée is veal, sharing the plate with half a potato and a few limp green beans. The dessert looks disappointing, a yellow pudding with strawberries. I am relieved when our industrious waiters bring out a large tray with enough Italian pastries for a full table of ten.

As I devour a cannoli and an éclair, I wondered how the Hilton's kitchen served the kosher meal last night. They would have needed a thousand-plus sets of kosher utensils, dishes, plus all the pans. Did they bring them in from the outside, or do they have multiple sets? I ask the other reporter if she thinks last night's meal was really kosher. She turns and asks the waiter if we could go back into the kitchen. He thinks she wants the recipe for the veal, and discreetly beckons the table captain. He's right. She doesn't care about the kosher dilemma. She just wants the recipe. Ratings: Food: 6. Interest: 6. Price $1,000. Congress Count: House 40, Senate 2.

Wednesday. I go to the Omni-Shoreham for the American Defense Preparedness Association Dinner honoring the Honorable Caspar Weinberger. Black-tie, reception at 7:00, dinner at 8:00. I arrive at 8:05. Weinberger has attracted seven TV cameras due to the *USS Stark* incident. The long speech he reads off the TelePrompTer is news, but there is no need to take notes. I've been given a copy in advance. I can concentrate on eating.

After his speech, Weinberger leaves (to meet George Bush, I wonder?), and the TV crews follow. I pick a table in the back, where I meet several staff members of ADPA, an organization apparently devoted to the happy task of harmonizing relations between the two halves of the military-industrial complex.

On the back of the program is printed a miniature dinner menu that looks like the ones you're given on overseas airline flights. I start with fresh fruit cocktail and the Caesar salad, successfully warding off the waiter, who wants to apply the awful house dressing. The rolls are much better than the Hilton's, and the butter is on the table. Most of the men at the dinner are retired military officers,

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and their dress uniforms are adorned with many medals and ribbons. The women wear typical evening gowns. Filet mignon is the main course. Chocolate mousse in a parfait glass is the dessert. (I grab a second one from an empty place setting.) Mercifully, there are no after-dinner speakers. Instead, all 72 members of the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps march into the Regency Ballroom in full uniform, replacing Fred Perry and the Glenn Miller Sound Orchestra. We are treated to a half-hour of traditional martial music at full volume. Food: 8. Interest: 4. Congress Count: one or two House members at most. Price: a steal at $90.

Thursday. The libertarian think tank, the Cato Institute, is celebrating its tenth anniversary. The scene is the main ballroom of the elegant, newly restored Willard Hotel in downtown Washington, and things kick off at 7 with the premiere of a 15-minute movie about the Cato Institute. This is followed by "Welcoming Remarks," "Comments," "Introduction," "Address," and "Entertainment." These libertarians sure know how to throw a party. Dinner is served at 9, after "Comments" and before "Introduction." The menu is nouvelle cuisine. We start off with a plate bearing three slivers of cold salmon and a slice of avocado, followed by a salad consisting of a single lettuce leaf and piece of Virginia goat cheese. Saved again by the rolls, which are fresh and plentiful. Dinner is a small veal chop with two baby carrots, about 40 grains of wild rice, two asparagus stalks, and a forkful of yellow squash. Still hungry after I polish off the rolls, I manage to cadge a couple of extra desserts—chocolate mousse again—just in time for the "Introduction." I reach my saturation level on libertarian theory after the first three hours.

I'M LUCKY. The air conditioner vent above my table is on full blast, helping me to stay awake while Nobel Prize winner James Buchanan drones on about public choice economics ("Address"). Even luckier are the people sitting in the back who can duck out early. I pity the diners trapped at the head table, who can't leave or even talk to each other. The evening's high point is when Buchanan says, "I'd like to end these remarks . . ." Post-lecture "Entertainment" is provided by an "Economic Satirist," a former investment banker now knocking 'em dead with his Paul Volcker jokes. Food rating: 2. Interest: 0. Congress Count: I am too bored to notice. Price: $100.

Weekend. With 22,000 conventioneers, the American Booksellers Association offers a staggering array of free food possibilities, although only one full-blown banquet. To maintain my critical eye and palate, I attend 13 events and skip another nine that I know about.

Tuesday. I arrive at the Sheraton-Washington at the close of the reception for the ABA Annual Anniversary Banquet. I realize that after last week, it is going to be tough to give the banquet a fair review. My tablemates, delighted to be at this fancy dinner, seem puzzled by my sullen attitude. There are no predinner speakers, only a group playing big band dance music. Opening course is a shrimp plate, no salad. The main meal is steak florentine with carrots, asparagus, and two starchy objects that taste like potato. Surprise, surprise, chocolate mousse for dessert. No after-dinner speakers, just an introduction to the entertainment: Peter, Paul and Mary. Their music takes me back to the good old days of the '60s, when I was three years old. Why is this banquet different from all other banquets? Because this is not a Washington crowd. The ABA people are from out of town, mostly from New York. That's how I explain the lack of speakers and the oddity of featuring entertainers for the entertainment. Ratings: Food: 4. Interest: 7. Congress Count: Zip. Price: $48.

MICHAEL ARONSON

Meanwhile, back in El Salvador . . .

DUARTE'S LAST STAND

San Salvador

Six months after San Salvador's devastating earthquake last October, President José Napoleón Duarte gathered the luminaries of Salvadoran officialdom on a dusty field outside the capital. As cameras rolled and Cabinet, military, and Christian Democratic Party leaders glad-handed with foreign dignitaries, Duarte signed over titles to 43 tiny cinder-block homes, the first of 43,000 he said the government would build for the displaced. Plans for the other 42,957 remained sketchy, but Duarte implored those still suffering to "keep faith." With a little help and $100 million or so in foreign donations, he would come to their aid as democracy marched forward.

Duarte began his fourth year in office on June 1, declaring that "the democratic revolution hasn't ended; it has hardly begun." But Salvadorans' faith in his government and his democracy has been rapidly dwindling. Trappings aside, the earthquake housing ceremony typified the political style of his Christian Democratic government. Duarte's public support may have evaporated, but he survives on the same maneuvering, negotiations, and patronage that have kept the party close to if not in power since civil war broke out in 1979. Salvadoran and U.S. Embassy officials have given up hoping for much more than that.

In his anniversary speech Duarte unveiled 54 new legislative proposals that he called the basis for a "new society." He may have some luck reviving his moribund administration, perhaps even before the legislative elections next March. Still, it is unlikely that two years from now progress toward democracy under his government will have been anything but slow and uneven.

In 1984, with strong U.S. encouragement, Duarte embraced a difficult, threefold strategy. First, the government was to reactivate El Salvador's paralytic economy. Second, the armed forces would isolate the guerrillas militarily and undercut their political support by curtailing human rights abuses and tolerating leftist political activities. And third,

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Duarte would seek rapprochement with relative moderates in the military and on the right to bolster the war effort and broaden his authority. The idea, which Duarte continues to pursue, was to forge a consensus to address the dire social and economic problems that fed revolution. The plan seemed coherent, if only as a means to weaken the guerrillas. Its application has been a continual exercise in crisis management.

DUARTE HAS MADE the least progress on what U.S. officials have long called the war's most important front: the economy. Under intense pressure from American officials, he abandoned thoughts of a recovery heavy on social programs and public sector jobs. The embassy, concerned that Congress will not forever foot $500 million annual bills for the Salvadoran war, turned Duarte to austerity. But his various attempts at belt-tightening have been erratic and, economic analysts generally agree, incomplete.

Beholden to the poor Salvadorans who elected him, Duarte aimed the brunt of the austerity measures at agricultural and business powers, his historic enemies. He tried consultations with business leaders, complex incentives, and righteous verbal counterattacks. The tactics did almost nothing to soothe the mutual antagonism.

He has had little more success in holding the allegiance of workers and campesinos to the left. After nearly two years of angry protests, Duarte announced his resolve to resist U.S. pressures for a second devaluation of the colon. On his three-year anniversary, he announced a new labor code and new steps to stimulate investment. His resistance to further austerity also tacitly recognized that in the midst of a war that cost $1.5 billion between 1981 and 1985, economic reactivation may be a fantasy.

Even if his new programs are more successful, the sources of popular misery are certain to persist. Inflation, traditionally low, was 11.7 percent in 1984; it is projected to be as high as 60 percent this year. Unemployment and underemployment hover above 50 percent. Real minimum wages have fallen dramatically. The trade balance continues to worsen, and the overall economy is stagnant. Regardless of Duarte's populist intentions, Salvadorans in poor barrios and on hardscrabble farms are wondering what, besides more sophisticated methods of controlling dissent, is the difference between the rule of Christian Democrats and the faintly reformist 1970s governments of the military-controlled National Conciliation Party (PCN).

The skepticism seems to be spreading along with charges of corruption at all levels of the Duarte government. Dissidents in the Christian Democratic Party and critics in the military reel off the names of more than a half-dozen senior officials they say have been privately proven corrupt. The government has demanded proof, and none has been forthcoming. Rightist political sources say the evidence will come out before the congressional and mayoral elections in March 1988, and now Duarte has proposed legislation to fight the corruption. But officials close to him have predicted that his loyalty to long-time supporters among the accused will probably rule out action against them.

The left has sought to make the most of the discontent. Urban guerrilla operatives and their allies have gone to work in leftist unions and the national university. Duarte has been more successful at blunting their efforts, relying mainly on a CIA-backed propaganda campaign. Leftist leaders of a once formidable union alliance, the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), were effectively denounced as guerrillas, their centrist allies as dupes. As radicals in the union movement pressed for continual destabilization, the government quietly negotiated to divide the front. With earlier leftist promises unfulfilled and memories of repression still vivid, many of the moderates slipped away. And until recently the armed forces showed notable restraint. But during a recent protest march, which followed a series of smaller but more violent demonstrations, army soldiers shot and severely wounded UNTS leader Julio Cesar Portillo.

The rebels are still far from retaking the streets of San Salvador. But they have not been enticed to disarm either by the army's battlefield performance or the significant improvements in the conduct of the security forces. Their recent attacks—including the March 31 attack on El Paraiso garrison, which killed 69 soldiers and an American military trainer—have been some of the most audacious and damaging in years.

Yet as the war has dragged on, it has only grown more unpopular. Inside the rebels' limited areas of influence, their fight is at least understood, if not universally supported. In the rest of the country, they take considerably more blame for the conflict than the government. Over the last two years, the guerrillas have increasingly relied on land mines and economic sabotage, costing them more popular support. Although the tactics were essential to preserving the rebels' military position, the guerrillas recently offered to give them up as a starting point for negotiations to end the war.

Even within the rebel alliance, there is a growing awareness that the guerrillas' power to destabilize has outstripped the strength of their political base. To press for a negotiated settlement, the Popular Social Christian Movement, the most vigorous political party in the rebel coalition, has quietly sent virtually its entire leadership back to work in San Salvador. The party seems to have recognized that its influence with the armed rebel factions can only slip as the war continues.

THE DYNAMIC between civilian and military factions is no different on the government's side. The armed forces are the one Salvadoran institution to gain strength under Duarte's civilian administration. In early 1986 the army launched a sweeping new pacification plan, United To Rebuild, which envisaged the military stepping in where Duarte had failed. The armed forces would pull together the government, the private sector, and the right-wing political opposition to confront war-related problems. The displaced would be relocated, their communities rebuilt, and their local economies reactivated as part of a

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sophisticated counterinsurgency campaign.

The plan marked the arrival of what is called the Tandona, the unprecedentedly large and politically powerful *tanda*, or class of officers who graduated from the Salvadoran military academy in 1966. Three of the Tandona's young, U.S.-trained colonels conceived United To Rebuild, and then successfully convinced American officials of its merits. Although some officers now say the program has met with the same bureaucratic and political obstacles that blocked Duarte's efforts, the Tandona's officers do little to hide their expectation that they will play a major role in directing the country in the coming years.

The Tandona professes a new belief in democracy, which many civilian officials would dispute. When one of the class's most powerful members, Lt. Col. Roberto Mauricio Staben, was implicated last spring in a kidnapping-for-profit ring, his comrades came subtly but strongly to his defense. (See "Salvador Justice" by Jefferson Morley, TNR, September 8, 1986.) Despite being implicated by two jailed suspects, Staben was returned to the command of his CIA-trained infantry battalion. When another Tandona colonel raped an armed forces secretary two months ago, he was transferred from his command, but according to military and diplomatic officials, no legal measures were pursued by civilian authorities.

While Duarte watched his authority over the military steadily decline, he weathered several rightist campaigns among military officers to promote his ouster. For the U.S. Embassy, that may be all that can be hoped for. Ambassador Edwin Corr, a native of Oklahoma who fashions himself something of a cowboy in pinstripes as well as a serious student of Latin America, recently told his deputies that their mission was to "drive the cattle to Cheyenne," however skinny they might be on arrival. Cheyenne is June 1, 1989, when Duarte is to hand over his blue-and-white presidential sash.

Knowledgeable diplomats say that Corr, the Salvadoran military, and Christian Democratic leaders in West Germany and Venezuela already have unofficially anointed Fidel Chavez Mena, Duarte's planning minister, for the job. Chavez Mena, a reserved and thoughtful lawyer, is the most respected Christian Democratic figure among military and business leaders, but he dislikes the politicking by which Christian Democrats become candidates and presidents. And Duarte is thought to back Julio Adolfo Rey Prendes, his powerful communications minister. "Fito" Rey, by contrast, is a dominant figure in the party machinery, the unrivaled master of smoke-filled rooms, and favorite of neither the military nor the right.

ALTHOUGH THE GOAL of a strong, independent civilian government appears to be receding, American officials argue that the system is slowly achieving stability. They note that when extreme opponents of the Duarte government wanted to resist Duarte's policies, they turned not to violence but to the rightist-dominated Supreme Court. But right-wing deputies also recently protested government tax policies and political maneuvering by boycotting the National Assembly. And with protest rising on the left, a new rightist political group, the National Action Movement, has armed some of its partisans for still uncertain purposes, according to two intelligence sources.

Meanwhile, disaffection is spreading, particularly in the slums of San Salvador, where democracy is identified not so much with civilian government as with Duarte himself. He is remembered here as the mayor who filled potholes, the junta president who preached reform, the candidate who promised peace, justice, and a better life. In the capital a few days after Duarte's concrete-hut giveaway, a couple of women slapping cornmeal into tortillas beside hovels of cardboard and corrugated tin tried to remember when they lost their faith in Duarte. Milagros Magana referred to "*mi gobierno*," my government, at first reflexively, then pointedly. She says Duarte let her down, and rattles off a litany of grievances: water shortages, electricity rationing, no government aid after the quake, and, no matter how hard she works, not enough food. Magana believed that the right wing would only bring more problems. Still, when the next elections come around, she won't vote. "I'm only one person, so they won't listen to me," she told me. "It's only going to get worse."

TIM GOLDEN

Tim Golden, South America correspondent for the *Miami Herald*, recently completed two years based in San Salvador.

Foreign policy for fun and profit.

TWISTED SISTERS

ONCE LEFT TO foreign service officers and an elite corps of millionaire patricians and Ivy League policy gurus, foreign policy is now a game that everyone wants to play. Towns and neighborhoods declare themselves "nuclear-free zones" and grant refugees political asylum. Mayors and governors spend much of their time abroad in quest of foreign trade and international prestige for their constituencies. Many local governments have even established their own State Departments: Los Angeles has a Chief of Protocol, Seattle an Office of International Affairs.

The most popular way to conduct this sort of local diplomacy is to declare that your city or state is a "sister" to some foreign municipality or nation. American cities and towns began to establish such formal relationships in large numbers after World War II, and they became known as "sister cities." In 1956 President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed a Sister City program as part of his larger People-to-People program, a forerunner of the Peace Corps that attempted to involve ordinary citizens in American foreign

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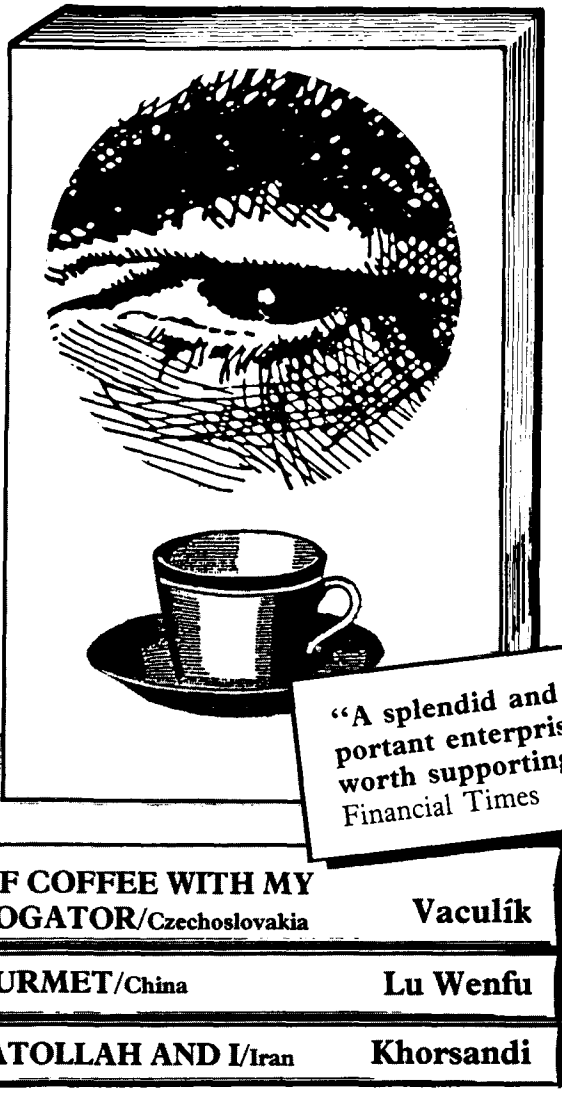
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THE AYATOLLAH AND I/Iran Khorsandi

GLASNOST–how the Czechs see it: Remember the one about the poor man in his crowded cottage? The elder advises him to bring in his goat, then his pig and his cow. Now that life is unbearable, says the wise man, you can remove the animals, and you'll be surprised at the space you've gained. The poor man's relief ? That's *glasnost*.

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relations. Sister Cities International, a private foundation created in 1967, now recognizes 1,282 sister city arrangements between 786 American and 1,153 foreign cities, ranging across all 50 states and 86 foreign countries. Richard Oakland, SCI's director of member services, reports that his organization and the local sister city committees that operate under its auspices (one at each end of each relationship) will raise and spend more than $250 million this year for sister city programs.

Sister cities are so popular that many cities have gone on to create extended families. Ten American localities, mostly on the West Coast and in the Sunbelt, each have agreements with nine or more foreign cities. Los Angeles leads the field with 15 siblings, among them such dissimilar locales as Bombay, Vancouver, and Tehran (though this has been "temporarily suspended"). L.A. and Seattle (which comes in second with 13 sisters) get so many requests for sister city affiliations that their city councils have instituted official guidelines to narrow the field of applicants.

Some of the municipal pairings are based on easily discernible affinities. Tokyo and New York City, the principal cities among the West's principal industrial powers, last year celebrated the 25th anniversary of their sisterhood. Chicago has the second largest Polish population in the world, and Los Angeles the second largest Mexican population; they are linked to Warsaw and Mexico City, respectively. In other cases, cities with similar industrial interests hook up, like Detroit and Toyota, Japan (auto manufacturing) or Cleveland and Gdansk (shipping) or Vail and St. Moritz (skiing, rich people). And cities with the same names often establish fraternal ties—the Toledos of Ohio and Spain; the Bayonnes of New Jersey and France.

In a few cases there is a tenuous historical connection between the cities. Columbus, Ohio, is a sister city of Genoa, Italy, Christopher Columbus's hometown. According to Don Alexander, president of Kansas City's Sister City Commission, the historic ties between his city and sister Seville, Spain, reside in the pseudo-Spanish architecture of Kansas City's Country Club Plaza, billed as the nation's oldest shopping center. Other relationships are perhaps unintentionally appropriate, like the one between Miami, Florida, and Cali, Colombia, both major centers of cocaine smuggling.

BUT CLEARLY most of the relationships are not rooted in historic ties or intrinsic connections of any kind. Sister cities first began to spread after World War II as a means of delivering foreign aid; most come about now at the instigation of an influential person or civic group that wants either to visit or to sell things to some foreign city. Seattle's guidelines sanction sisterhood with any city that "has an economic character consistent with Seattle's desire to increase trade and tourism." Sometimes a city government or citizens' group just wants to bask in the association with some exotic clime. "Having a relationship with Buenos Aires sounds wonderful; people sometimes have to look at the map to see where it is, but it sounds good," says Alexander.

Much of SCI's quarter billion goes to projects that seem more appropriate to the local Jaycees or chamber of commerce than the kind of federalist Peace Corps that Eisenhower envisioned. Not surprisingly, most of the projects involve extensive foreign travel by the local leaders who organize the sister city committees. SCI gives yearly awards for the city-pairs that run the best programs. The award for Best Overall Youth Program went to Slidell, Louisiana, which is paired with Panama City, Panama. The Slidell International Youth Association achieved such diplomatic breakthroughs as a trip to the EPCOT Center at Disney World, a reception for German exchange students (perhaps there were no Panamanians available), and a contest for "the most creative display of foods honoring the city of Panama." The Dade County, Florida/Kingston, Jamaica sisterhood won a "Special Achievement Award" for, among other things, sending adapted versions of " 'Sesame Street' fire safety materials now used in Dade County schools" to Jamaican schoolchildren. A "Best Single Youth Project Award" went to Denver for teaching five exchange students from Karmiel, Israel, how to make artificial snow, which, according to SCI's announcement of the awards, "will greatly help the Israeli ski industry." And no doubt speed the Middle East peace process.

Though technically Sister City programs are exchanges with the foreign city, they tend to be one-sided, with the American organizers doing most of the work and paying most of the freight. Some foreign governments also make fairly cynical use of the arrangement. When the United States opened diplomatic relations with mainland China in January 1979, Taiwanese cities aggressively began to affiliate themselves with as many American cities as possible, as a way of currying favor with American voters. During the Carter administration, Kaohsiung, the second largest city in Taiwan, even signed up tiny Plains, Georgia. "They haven't seen anyone from Kaohsiung since Carter left office," says Oakland.

BUT SCI is only one of several organizations that arrange sister city relationships, and the only one that is primarily a vehicle for civic boosterism. The others are more oriented toward physical aid and/or political activism. In 1984 the anti-nuclear group Ground Zero got 1,000 American towns to establish sororal relations with 1,000 Soviet towns. The pro-Sandinista National U.S.-Nicaragua Friendship Conference sponsors over 70 sister city arrangements (SCI recognizes only 18 of these) between towns in the two countries. The Nicaraguans have even set up their own sister city office to handle the philanthropic traffic.

On the other side of the political spectrum, a quasi-official outfit called the Partners of the Americas receives a large chunk of its $6 million budget from the Agency for International Development, a wing of the State Department. Partners administers a Sister States program, linking our states with Latin American nations. The Partners projects often entail agricultural experiments and large-

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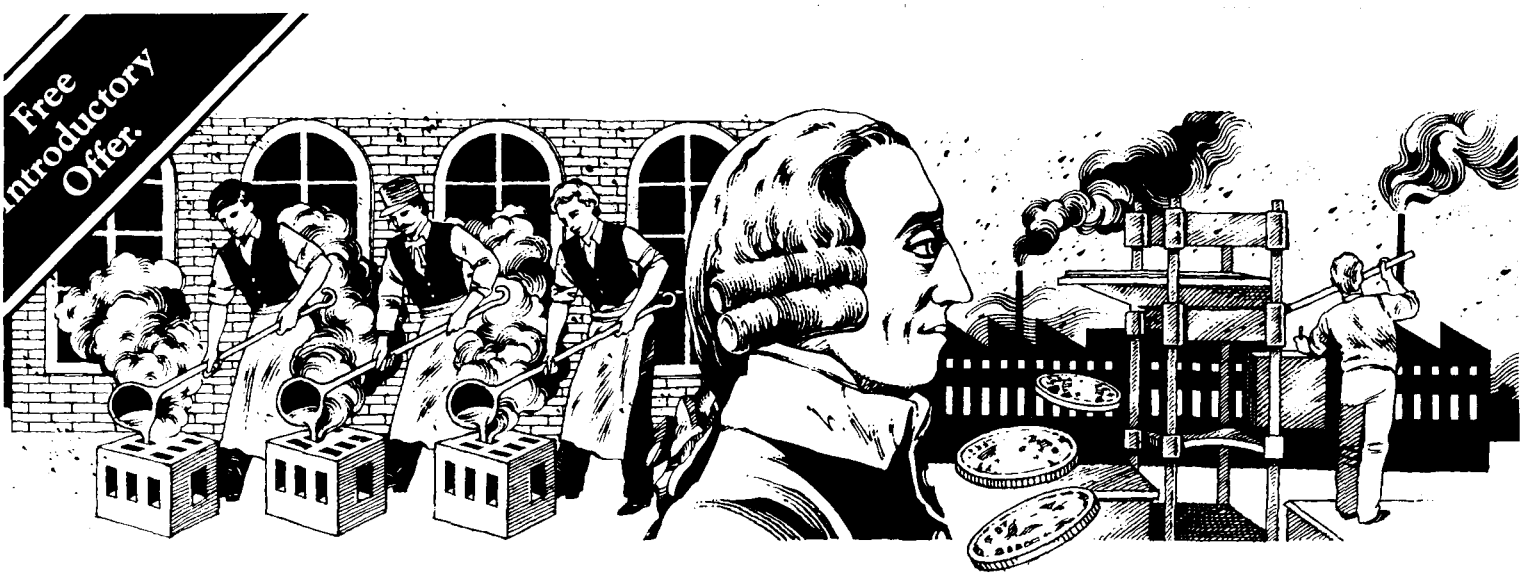

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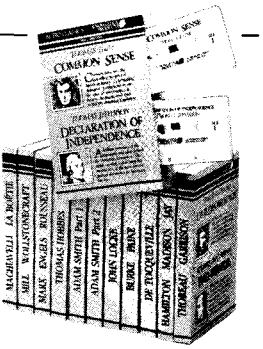

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scale shipments of medical supplies. Unlike the left-wing groups, Partners tries to avoid dealing with the governments of the countries it works in, where possible working with the local business communities. This inspired President Reagan to hail the group as a paragon of "voluntarism at work internationally."

Both sides are most active in Wisconsin, which established its ties to Nicaragua in 1965, under the Somoza regime. In contrast to almost all the other relationships, which are usually little known about by anyone except the organizers, the Wisconsin-Nicaragua relationship is participated in by a broad range of groups, among them SCI committees in several towns, activist groups centered at the universities, and a very successful Partners program. The last had its own publishing facilities and two radio stations in Nicaragua, all of which were confiscated in the 1979 revolution. The Sandinistas arrested many of the Nicaraguan Partners and even executed some. The Partnership kept some of its programs in Nicaragua alive by maintaining a resolutely non-political stance, a move that eventually persuaded the Sandinistas to leave them alone. "We get it from both sides. If we bring a Nicaraguan doctor up from a public hospital, we're accused of being Communists. If the guy's from a private hospital, we're accused of being CIA operatives," says Peter Thornquist, the executive director of Wisconsin-Nicaragua Partners.

The left in Wisconsin, however, was less convinced, and in 1984 a coalition of over 40 pro-Sandinista groups around the state formed the Wisconsin Coordinating Committee on Nicaragua. "There was a concern among the groups that a lot of the ties the Partners had were the old ties. They were trying to help the private sector, while we specifically wanted to help the public sector," WCCN president Mirette Seireg explains. In addition to medical and agricultural projects similar to those of the Partners (though directed toward government hospitals and farms rather than private ones), the WCCN sponsors educational tours for Wisconsinites who want to see the revolution in action and backs students who want to work for the Nicaraguan government as *internacionalistas*. Seireg's group raised a million dollars for Nicaragua last year, and that much already this year. Seireg estimates that by the end of the year the WCCN will have collected enough to offset the money Oliver North sent to the *contras*.

Relations between the WCCN and the older group they have partly supplanted are cordial but wary. "The other group claims to be apolitical, yet there are people at both ends who are quite political," Seireg suggests. Presented with this charge, Thornquist adopts a long-suffering tone: "We have a lot of poultry scientists in our group, and that's their main interest, producing a bigger chicken."

The WCCN, on the other hand, may have at least one major foreign policy coup to its credit. It brought Nicaraguan vice president Sergio Ramírez to Madison last fall, and arranged a meeting with the family of then-imprisoned flyer Eugene Hasenfus, a Wisconsin native. Hasenfus's sister apologized for her brother's actions, and in another meeting, then-Governor Anthony Earl appealed to Ramírez for the prisoner's release. When President Daniel Ortega made his speech "requesting" that Hasenfus be pardoned, he mentioned Earl and invoked the Historic Sister-State Relationship, as the participants invariably refer to it, with Wisconsin. In some cases, it seems, conservative zealots have been overtaken by their opponents in dreaming up novel ways of carrying out extradiplomatic foreign initiatives.

JEFFREY L. PASLEY

From Bolshevism to Reaganism.

TROTSKY'S ORPHANS

BY MICHAEL MASSING

TROTSKYITES HAVE long been distinguished by their belief in the historical "moment." Through the long, dark years of splits and schisms, defections and deviations, they have held firm in their belief that their time would come. Well, it finally has. Almost a half century after the death of Leon Trotsky, his American offspring have finally gained power—in the administration of Ronald Reagan. The rise of Trotsky's heirs is one of the best-kept secrets of the Reagan revolution. Trotsky's political progeny have captured many sensitive posts in the Washington bureaucracy, especially in the area of foreign policy. They have provided a skilled cadre that performs the intellectual spadework needed to nurture the Reagan Doctrine and other initiatives.

Bridging the gulf between Leon Trotsky and Ronald Reagan is a tiny but influential political organization called Social Democrats, USA. SDUSA's origins extend back to the

Michael Massing is a writer in New York. His last article for TNR was "Snap Books" (May 4).

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Socialist Workers Party of the 1930s, a splinter group of Trotskyites. Over the years, repeated doctrinal disputes and ideological skirmishes have transformed the party faithful, and today Trotsky would barely recognize them. The Social Democrats combine a cold war ideology with a style tending toward the sectarian. They are sometimes called "right-wing Bolsheviks" or "State Department socialists." They belong to the Socialist International, yet enthusiastically support American interventionism abroad. (The featured speaker at SDUSA's last convention was Alfonso Robelo, a leader of the *contras*.) Members address one another as "comrade," yet chide liberals for being soft on communism.

Strangest of all, the Social Democrats, while proclaiming allegiance to the Democratic Party, have gained prominence under Ronald Reagan. The National Endowment for Democracy is headed by Carl Gershman, a former SDUSA executive director. An influential pro-*contra* lobby called Prodemca (Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America) is directed by Penn Kemble, an SDUSA vice chairman. The sprawling international affairs department of the AFL-CIO, which has an annual budget of about $40 million—most of it provided by the U.S. government—last year named as its director Tom Kahn, a long-time SDUSA leader. And among the principal theorists seeking to justify Reagan policy abroad is Joshua Muravchik (see "Maximum Feasible Containment," TNR, June 1), the author of a recent book about human rights and a member of SDUSA's national committee. Not bad for an organization with fewer than 1,000 active members. "In relation to numbers, the Social Democrats are one of the most influential groups you can find," says Donald Slaiman, deputy director of the AFL-CIO's organizational field department and an SDUSA vice chairman.

IDEOLOGICALLY, the Social Democrats resemble other powerful knots of conservatives such as the neocons. For intellectual inspiration they look to Sidney Hook (who serves as SDUSA's honorary chairman) and the Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski. Members of SDUSA are frequent contributors to *Commentary* and the *American Spectator*. Their reading list ranges from Jean-François Revel's *The Totalitarian Temptation* to Shirley Christian's *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*. Although some members take a liberal stance on domestic issues, advocating, for instance, national health insurance, they reserve most of their energy for foreign policy.

The Social Democrats are masters of tactical politics. For the most part, the neocons disparage the idea of government service. Intellectuals to the core, they have preferred to influence policy from without. By contrast, the Social Democrats have eagerly pursued positions of influence. More than perhaps any other group in Washington, they recognize the power that bureaucracies can wield if properly managed. They have gladly accepted middle-level jobs that would make most intellectuals cringe.

The Social Democrats also have a high regard for organized labor. Whereas many neoconservatives (and neoliberals, for that matter) dismiss the AFL-CIO as a pernicious special-interest group, the Social Democrats view it as the cutting edge for social change in America. SDUSA literature is devoid of criticism of the AFL-CIO leadership, and job-seeking members have flocked to the AFL-CIO bureaucracy in Washington and to the staffs of affiliated unions. The Social Democrats' influence at the labor federation is so great that some non-members joke about joining in order to advance their careers.

THE EASE with which such a small group has penetrated labor's vast domain reflects the unique antecedents of the Social Democrats. They are, at bottom, Shachtmanites. Max Shachtman, a theorist cum activist who died in 1973, is little remembered today, but he played a critical role in modern American politics, inspiring several generations of American intellectuals. Born in Poland in 1904, Shachtman was brought to New York City as an infant by his Jewish parents. He eventually entered City College but dropped out to pursue his interest in politics. He soon found his way into the Communist Party, but in 1928 he came upon a document by Trotsky attacking Stalin for his brutal policies. Shachtman was impressed and began echoing Trotsky's charges. The Party promptly expelled him. In response, Shachtman and a fellow heretic named James P. Cannon helped found a splinter group that became the leading exponent of Trotskyism in America.

Shachtman gathered about him a band of dedicated leftists. He had a charismatic personality, simultaneously cosmopolitan and earthy, kibitzing and conniving. And his speeches, which could last for hours, were dazzling with their caustic wit and Marxist erudition. His authority was enhanced by his friendship with Trotsky. He accompanied the old Bolshevik on many legs of his itinerant exile, carrying along a revolver in anticipation of assassination attempts.

Young people were drawn to Shachtman, especially the Jewish college students who enlisted in the radical causes of the 1930s and '40s. Night after night Shachtman led them in talmudic discussions of obscure Marxist texts. His disciples, known as "Max's boys," came to fancy themselves part of a revolutionary elite with an inside track on history. One of them, Irving Howe, recalls in his autobiography: "If Shachtman, during one of his marathon speeches, made a joke about Karl Radek or threw out a fleeting mention of 'the August bloc,' those of us in the know felt as gleeful as a philosophy graduate student pouncing on a subtle point in a Wittgenstein blue book." Never exceeding more than a few hundred in number, the Shachtmanites formed a classic Trotskyite sect.

In the late 1930s, however, differences emerged between Shachtman and his mentor. Although Trotsky condemned the atrocities of Stalinism, he supported the Soviet Union's nationalization of property as an impor-

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tant step toward the creation of a truly socialist state. But as Stalin's excesses multiplied, Shachtman came to believe that the Soviet government had merely replaced the bourgeoisie as the chief oppressor of the working class. The final break came in 1939, when the Soviet Union invaded Finland. Trotsky defended the move; Shachtman condemned it as Soviet imperialism. Already appalled by the Hitler-Stalin pact, Shachtman went on to develop a "third camp" school of socialism, critical of both East and West. With the onset of the cold war, Shachtman's views attracted a new generation of anti-Stalinist leftists, Michael Harrington among them.

With the approach of the 1960s, however, Shachtman's ideas began to change once again. The civil rights movement brought him some impressive new recruits, including such activists as Tom Kahn and Rachelle Horowitz. Curiously, though, just as the nation's campuses were to experience a radical upsurge, Shachtman sought what he termed an opening to the right. In 1958 he folded his quasi-Trotskyites into the larger and more moderate Socialist Party, the organ of Debs and Thomas. Shachtman reacted to the rise of the New Left with disdain, regarding SDS and its ilk as snotty elitists. Still considering himself a good Marxist, he increasingly saw the AFL-CIO as the chief representative of the American working class. Before long, Shachtman's line began to echo George Meany's.

Shachtman's change of heart became most apparent in international issues. In 1961 he made some positive noises about the Bay of Pigs invasion, and as the Vietnam War escalated he spoke sympathetically of Johnson's war effort. Employing a twisted form of Trotskyism, he branded Ho Chi Minh a Stalinist who, if victorious, would bring a reign of terror to the south. The U.S. presence, he argued, could serve as a shield behind which a democratic revolution could coalesce. As the anti-war movement broadened, Shachtman's differences with the left grew, and he bitterly denounced student demonstrators as flower children ignorant of history and politics. In 1972 he supported the campaign of Henry Jackson, and after the nomination of McGovern gave the impression that he preferred almost anyone else. His stance was echoed by many of his younger disciples, who by now included Carl Gershman, Penn Kemble, and Joshua Muravchik.

DESPITE THEIR political odyssey, the Shachtmanites retained the operating style of their Trotskyite days. In a forthcoming study, *If I Had a Hammer: The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left*, Smith College historian Maurice Isserman writes that, even after joining the Socialist Party, "the Shachtmanites continued to function as a small, disciplined cadre, operating in secrecy, persuaded that they alone possessed the truth, at once hard and unscrupulous and self-righteous in their attitudes, oriented solely toward the struggle for power, and the manipulation of power once gained."

Not long after the 1972 election, the Socialist Party held its annual convention in a Manhattan hotel. The several hundred delegates who attended were deeply divided along political lines. Oddly, both of the two major factions considered themselves Shachtmanites. The left, led by Michael Harrington, looked to the older "third camp" Shachtman; the right, led by Kahn, Gershman, et al., looked to the updated anti-communist. A vote was taken, and the right-wing Shachtman camp came out on top. They took control of the party and renamed it Social Democrats, USA. Harrington promptly led his followers out of the organization and reconstituted them as the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee—later called Democratic Socialists of America. Thus in America a democratic socialist leans left and a social democrat right.

THE 1970s were a lonely time for SDUSA. The organization's small staff, directed by Gershman, churned out op-ed pieces, published a monthly newspaper, and held annual conventions. Recruiting was difficult and membership remained flat. Matters didn't improve under President Jimmy Carter. The Social Democrats—still worshiping at the altar of Henry Jackson—remained a marginal force.

But with the election of Ronald Reagan, things quickly changed. When Jeane Kirkpatrick hired her staff at the United Nations, she hired Gershman as an aide. He went on to serve as an adviser to the Kissinger Commission on Central America, then as president of the National Endowment for Democracy. Penn Kemble became head of Prodemca, which has played a key role in mobilizing moderate and liberal support for Reagan policy in Central America. And the Social Democrats have gained increasing influence within the labor bureaucracy, reflected most prominently in Kahn's appointment as head of the AFL-CIO's international affairs department.

Social Democrats bristle at the suggestion that there is anything improper about their influence. "What I resent is the whole notion that the Social Democrats are operating as a Bolshevik faction, that they are behaving as a subversive organization that plots and schemes and undermines and sabotages," says Arch Puddington, the former editor of the Social Democrats' newspaper, who works at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in New York. "That's what's implied in publications like the *Nation*, *In These Times*, and sometimes even in the daily press. What I like about the Social Democrats is that they're normal, intelligent people who have very strong political convictions. They are not fanatics."

Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, acknowledges that the success of the Social Democrats has made them controversial. Though not a card-carrying member, Shanker sits on SDUSA's national advisory council and helps raise money for the organization; his union employs many Social Democrats. Suspicions about the group run so high that every time he hires a Social Democrat, he has to explain why. Labor officials "don't really seek out Social Democrats," he says, they just happen to be more qualified than most other applicants. In fact, if hiring decisions were based on merit alone, even

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more Social Democrats would get hired. "They've had a certain type of tough political education," he maintains. "They know they will never attain power electorally. So they learn other things—how to caucus, organize factions, draw up policy papers, handle ideas. It's a good training ground for politics."

To understand how such unglamorous skills have translated into influence, consider the National Endowment for Democracy. Under Gershman, NED has financed numerous programs opposed to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. It selected Prodemca as the conduit for thousands of dollars in assistance to the newspaper *La Prensa*. Similarly, the endowment has provided seed money to an arm of the A. Philip Randolph Institute for a project "designed to identify and assist South African organizations dedicated to a non-violent strategy to eliminate apartheid and to achieve democracy." In practice, this tends to mean support for organizations less militant than the United Democratic Front and the African National Congress. The institute, located in the New York offices of the teachers union, is headed by Bayard Rustin, SDUSA's national chairman.

The Social Democrat connection at NED is especially strong when it comes to organized labor. The endowment has four "core grantees": the Democratic and Republican parties, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the AFL-CIO. Labor has received by far the most endowment funds—more than $30 million since 1984. Labor has two representatives on NED's board, one of whom is Al Shanker. (The other is Lane Kirkland.) The funds granted by NED go to an AFL-CIO agency called the Free Trade Union Institute, whose executive director, Eugenia Kemble (Penn Kemble's sister), is a Social Democrat. For 17 years before coming to the AFL-CIO, she worked for Shanker's union. At FTUI, distribution of NED funds is supervised by a small committee made up of Eugenia Kemble, Kirkland, Kahn, and AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Tom Donahue, who is married to Shachtman disciple Rachelle Horowitz.

It would be foolish to argue that the Social Democrats set policy for the AFL-CIO or the National Endowment for Democracy. Lane Kirkland, for instance, hardly takes his marching orders from the organization. In the end, the Social Democrats have been less involved in policy-making than in what might be called political mobilization. Savvy and articulate, comfortable on podiums and op-ed pages, group members have helped to popularize Reagan-style diplomacy with constituencies not generally susceptible to conservative proselytizing. To reach out to the Italian Socialist Party or the editors of *La Prensa*, the Social Democrats are far better suited than, say, Oliver North or the Heritage Foundation. Similarly, to line up American labor behind U.S. policy in Central America, it helps to have a group like SDUSA that says all the right things on fair trade and the minimum wage.

As a result of their rise under Ronald Reagan, the Social Democrats have frequently stood accused of opportunism. That's not a fair criticism. Social Democratic ideology may seem expedient, but a look at pre-Reagan SDUSA literature shows that the Social Democrats have not changed their views. It just took a right-wing Republican in the White House to give them their "moment."

What would Trotsky say?

Mrs. T., Kinnochio, and the two Davids.

BRITAIN'S CHEESY CAMPAIGN

BY FRED BARNES

London

Margaret Thatcher has a large toy panda. I know this with utter certainty because I, along with dozens of photographers, TV cameramen, and journalists, was there when she received the panda as a gift. It was May 30, 12 days before the British election, and the prime minister was spending her morning near Heathrow Airport at the office of DHL World Wide Express, a new and highly successful international delivery firm. Thatcher is seeking to become the first prime minister in modern times elected to three consecutive terms, and her visit to DHL was with that in mind. So was the panda, which was dropped down a chute in the company's package sorting room. She hugged it, and photographers and TV cameramen recorded the scene. As Thatcher departed, they got a second chance. She posed again with panda clutched tightly, the iron lady of English politics trying to show a softer side while plugging her favorite theme, the joy of entrepreneurial zeal.

All that was missing was music. Thatcher does have a theme song for her re-election campaign, written by Andrew Lloyd Webber, the composer of *Evita*, *Cats*, and the new London hit, *The Phantom of the Opera*. The Labour Party has spread the nasty rumor that the music was a leftover from *Evita*. But officials of Thatcher's Conservative

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Party insist it's original. "Webber's a Tory," an official explained. Still, it sounds more like a tune written to embellish the opening of a Buenos Aires supermarket than one composed for political uplift. In any case, it blared from loudspeakers at Thatcher's next stop, a Conservative rally at Ealing, a middle-class London suburb. (It also pipes forth at the start and finish of her Monday-through-Friday morning press conferences at party headquarters.)

There are a few differences between a parliamentary election in Great Britain and an American presidential campaign. Paid advertising on television is not allowed, which eliminates the biggest single campaign expense in American races. And the length of the campaign is kept mercifully brief. On May 11 Thatcher called the election for 650 seats in Parliament for June 11. This time frame is a little misleading, since the three parties (Conservative, Labour, Alliance) had been preparing for her announcement for months and were ready with long-winded manifestos published in booklet form. Still, the British campaign is the equivalent of Labor Day to Election Day in a U.S. presidential campaign. There are no primaries. The parties already have their top candidates, their parliamentary leaders.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Otherwise, the campaigners act just like their American counterparts, only more so. Nearly everything they do is aimed for television. All the candidates—Thatcher, Neil Kinnock of Labour, and the pair known as "the two Davids" heading the Alliance, David Steel of the Liberal Party and David Owen of the Social Democratic Party—have brought a rich new definition to the photo opportunity. If President Reagan knew how good they are at it, he'd be envious. Thatcher's session with the panda made the four national TV networks. So did Kinnock's visits to factory after factory and embrace of baby after baby. And Steel's brief stint conducting an orchestra. And Owen's drop-by at a Sikh temple, with handkerchief on his head and shoes off. What's more, Thatcher isn't the only candidate with a theme song. Kinnock uses Brahms's First Symphony, which was playing on his radio when his car flipped several years ago and he escaped unharmed. The Alliance theme is a trumpet piece from Handel. The parties also have colors: Labour red, Alliance yellow, and Tory baby blue. Denis Thatcher, the prime minister's husband, wears a tie in Conservative blue when he stumps with his wife. He calls his wife "Sweetie." Her aides call her "Mrs. T."

The chief obsession of British politicians and press is not issues, but polls. The obsession is only heightened by the fact that polling in a three-party race is extraordinarily tricky and the results often inaccurate. Newspapers routinely make poll results their lead story, and evening news shows offer previews of the next day's polls. The *Guardian* blends the last five polls—different surveys with different sample sizes—and comes up with a grand but methodologically flawed average. Thatcher didn't call the election until there had been months of favorable polls (and Tory success in local elections on May 7). The day she announced the election date, Conservative leaders projected their party with 43 percent, Labour with 30, the Alliance with 25. That translates into 383 seats in Parliament for the Tories (down from 392), 193 for Labour (from 207), and 52 for the Alliance (up from 27). More recent polls have shown the Tories holding their lead, but Labour gaining at the Alliance's expense. This may or may not reflect reality. In 1983 polls vastly underestimated the Alliance vote. In 1970 polls missed entirely the fall of Harold Wilson's Labour government. Reporters weren't sure he was ousted until he emerged from an elevator on election night and said he'd return in a few hours to answer their questions. Behind him on the elevator, his secretaries were weeping.

There's no evidence that the British public is electrified by the campaign. Rallies are attended by party loyalists and practically no one else. But TV and newspapers treat the election as the event of the decade. At one point on May 27, three of the four national television networks

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were simultaneously presenting three-way debates among party leaders. No aspect is too piddling for mention in the newspapers. It was reported that actors Michael Caine and Stewart Granger favor Thatcher, though neither has ever voted or plans to this time. Actresses Glenda Jackson and Peggy Ashcroft and writers Harold Pinter and John Mortimer held a press conference at which they endorsed Kinnock. Jackson wore a bright red dress, the kind that stands out on TV. Journalists covering the campaign are narcissistic in the extreme. British papers examine how TV and other papers are covering the campaign. Print reporters are interviewed on television. For an American perspective, Chris Ogden, the London bureau chief for *Time*, regularly appears on BBC.

DESPITE THEIR reputation for thoughtfulness, British politicians have a fondness for gimmicks and raw demagoguery. Each weekday morning of the campaign, the three parties have press conferences in London at which the candidates (except Kinnock, who is often absent) normally play up some issue and then take questions. On May 26 Gerald Kaufman, Labour's shadow home minister, appeared with what he called a crime-o-meter, a large board that ticked off a new number every seven seconds. This signified that a new crime is committed every seven seconds in Britain, Kaufman said, denouncing "Thatcher's criminal record." On May 28 Thatcher and her social services minister, Norman Fowler, brought a huge map of England with blinking lights, yellow for hospitals, white for hospitals under construction, and pink for hospitals planned. The purpose, Fowler said, was to show how much the Tories had done for the National Health Service. Thatcher liked the gimmick so much that she had Fowler explain again to late-arriving reporters what the lights meant. But a reporter asked if there were more or fewer hospital beds since Thatcher took over in 1979. Fowler ducked this. On May 29 an young Alliance member of Parliament, Simon Hughes, sat next to eight feet of computer printouts, which he said was the 768,000-person waiting list for NHS hospitals. Under questioning, Hughes sheepishly admitted these weren't the real names: "The names at the start are valid, but the names after that are a symbol." Reporters jeered. "It's not a fake at all," he protested. "It's exactly the length of the [real] list." On TV that night, Hughes was ridiculed.

By American standards, the demagoguery here is outlandish. Even Jesse Jackson would blush. Denis Healey, who will be foreign minister if Labour wins, likened Thatcher to Stalin. He also accused her of trying to sabotage Reagan's deal with the Soviets on pulling missiles out of Europe. (In truth, Thatcher has accepted the deal, reluctantly.) Labour leaders accuse Thatcher of consciously trying to destroy the health service and the school system. In one flight of rhetoric, Kinnock said Thatcher and her aides were avaricious "Dickensian" figures in their own right. "The man who produced Wackford Squeers and Heep and Quilp and Gradgrind and Bumble would not even have to think up new names," he said, running down the list of Thatcher ministers. He said Thatcher is the "Miss Havisham of Dulwich, waiting until the millennium for the third term that never came."

THATCHER, 61, is hardly living on false hopes. She is a domineering figure, with no rivals or near-rivals in Toryland. She stands so far above other Conservatives that allies have suggested her only fitting successor is David Owen, the SDP leader who sounds considerably closer to Thatcher these days than to his former Labour colleagues. Thatcher was asked about this recently by Bruce Anderson of the *Sunday Telegraph*. She said nothing. Anderson then said Owen would surely prefer serving under Thatcher than under Steel, his Liberal partner in the Alliance. "I bet he would," she replied. "I bet he would."

Despite Thatcher's warm friendship with Reagan, they have little in common. In fact, the only thing they share is conservatism. She's a detail person, lacking in charisma, warmth, and even self-confidence. Thatcher is what one of her aides characterizes as "a remorseless worker," brimming with determination and ideological passion. Thatcher stayed up until nearly 3 a.m. on May 28 finishing a speech to be given that day. In it she displayed her own flair for demagoguery, accusing Kinnock, who wants to denuclearize Britain, of "a defense policy of the white flag" and insisting that the Labour Party is being consumed by "the termites of the left." Her energy has its impact. Reagan is a spent force; she is bristling with plans to further what she immodestly calls "Thatcherism."

Almost solely because of her leadership, the conservative movement in Britain remains vigorous. She's surrounded herself with "new conservatives" drawn from the middle class. She installed as Tory chairman Norman Tebbit, a former airline pilot who left school at 16. No longer is Thatcher troubled by moderate "wets" in her Cabinet. Instead, a Tory official says there's a "new consensus" behind the goal of smashing socialism through more denationalization, lower taxes, and the shift of power over schools and public housing to private citizens. A notable moderate among her top half-dozen advisers, Education Minister Kenneth Baker, is now the champion of her most radical proposal, which would allow parents to seize control of their children's school from local authorities, many of them Labour leftists, and operate it with a grant from the national government. When Baker initially took over, he declared he could work easily with the liberal bureaucrat who, in effect, ran the ministry. Soon he fired the fellow.

In the 1983 election Thatcher settled for a stand-pat manifesto, but this time she wanted something bolder to show that her government isn't idling. There was more to this tactic than political posturing. When confronted with criticism of her achievements as minimal, she says, "Quite right. Quite right. We've got a lot to do." In particular, her economic record is unimpressive, though the economy is now growing. Inflation is down, but unemployment, 1.2 million when she took office in 1979, is still above three million after eight consecutive months of decline.

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Her tax and spending cuts were tame. She reduced income taxes, but boosted the value-added tax. Government spending as a percentage of the economy rose from 43 percent to 44 percent.

Privatization has been more successful. She sold off British Gas, British Airways, Jaguar, and British Telecom, among others. Now she wants to denationalize airports, waterworks, and electricity. Thatcher is no crazed ideologue. She touched off a flap when she said that parent-run schools would be allowed to charge fees like private schools. That, indeed, was her plan. But she hastily retreated and began boasting that the new schools would be as free as ever.

For a plodder, Thatcher is surprisingly facile, sometimes witty, and always combative. She refuses to put jokes in speeches, claiming this is unbecoming to a prime minister. When told at her press conference on May 28 that Kinnock had just scoffed at the idea of a Soviet threat and said that military occupation of Western Europe was unfeasible, she replied, "I seem to remember that in 1940 it was. When we are dealing with these defense matters, I am constantly saying to everyone, 'Just look at the map.' It is Europe that is liable to a conventional occupation." When asked why she refused Kinnock's challenge to a one-on-one debate, she reminded reporters that she takes questions in Parliament twice a week. Besides, she said, "You found me much more easy to question than someone to whom you cannot put questions."

THE PERSON dodging the press is Kinnock, 45, who has a perfectly good reason for staying away from the Fleet Street reporters. They are predominantly Tory, and cover him brutally. Of the 11 national dailies, only two, the *Guardian* and the tabloid *Daily Mirror*, favor Kinnock. The *Daily Mail*, the *Sun*, and the *Telegraph* are relentlessly critical. On May 28 the *Daily Mail* ran a front-page "comment" that attacked him as a lightweight who runs from the press, and the *Sun* featured a drawing on page one that showed him quaking in the face of a Soviet soldier.

Hostile as the press is, Kinnock is responsible for hurting his own campaign after a soaring start. In answering David Frost during a television interview on May 24, Kinnock spoke of "using the resources that you've got to make any [Soviet] occupation untenable." His press secretary, Patricia Hewitt, put her hands in her face when he said this. It wasn't until two days later that the Tories and Alliance both jumped on him. The gaffe proved to be a turning point, and Kinnock was on the defensive for days over his support for unilaterally stripping Britain of nuclear arms and supposedly making guerrilla warfare the country's defense. Kinnock began carping at the press, barking at one young reporter, "Don't patronize me, son." This made reporters all the more eager to bait him.

Kinnock has some real accomplishments as leader of the Labour Party since 1984. He is no intellectual heavyweight—the satirical magazine *Private Eye* calls him "Kinnochio"—but he is a great orator and a brilliant political infighter. He has curbed, though hardly banished, what is widely known as "the loony left" of his party. This phrase angers Thatcher. She tells associates, "It's not the loony left. It's the hard left." Kinnock has installed moderates as top Labour Party officials and as his chief campaign advisers, including Healey, deputy Labour leader Roy Hattersley, and Bryan Gould, a former TV anchorman. With their backing, he pushed through a vague and relatively moderate manifesto. Rather than nationalizing privatized firms, it calls for "social ownership" of some of them. Instead of saying that American military bases must be closed, it calls only for banishment of U.S. nuclear weapons. Thatcher called this the "iceberg manifesto," in which Labour's real leftist intentions are submerged. Kinnock got a further boost when Labour's first television presentation was broadcast on May 21. It was a lyrical personality sketch on Kinnock, produced by the writer and director of *Chariots of Fire*. It ended with "Kinnock" emblazoned across the screen in place of the normal "Vote Labour."

Kinnock's early surge surprised the Tories. "Why we assumed they'd run as bad a campaign as they did in 1983, I don't know," says a Thatcher adviser. Actually, there's a reason—they regard Kinnock with total contempt. Tebbit loves to twit Kinnock for his verbosity. "Trying to get a brief answer out of Kinnock is like trying to drink from a burst water main," he says. The decline of the Alliance also surprised the Tories. But the effects were good for the Conservatives. The renewed fear of government by Labour left-wingers and union tyrants pulled voters from the Alliance and firmed up Tory support. The problem for the Alliance was that Steel, 48, and Owen, 49, often disagree. Asked on a TV program which was the greater evil, a Tory or a Labour government, Owen was unequivocal. Because of Kinnock's defense views, Labour is unfit to govern, Owen declared. Steel wouldn't answer the question. The next day at their press conference, Owen sneered again at Kinnock for talking about occupation of Britain. "When you've accepted occupation, there's not much need for a defense policy." Even the carefully calibrated Alliance policy on defense began to unravel. It involves keeping Polaris missiles, but not upgrading the nuclear submarine fleet. Owen, however, hinted that he wanted to go with the more modern Trident missiles.

THE ALLIANCE'S HOPE is for a hung Parliament in which neither the Conservatives nor Labour holds a majority. That would allow Steel and Owen to negotiate their way into a coalition government. The chances of this are slim, and Labour's prospects for capturing a majority are no better. Even a stupendous blunder might not cause the Tories to lose. Certainly they expect to win. In a laser show presented as a buildup to Thatcher's speeches, the phrase "ten more years" appeared, until Thatcher had it taken out. Her aides also distributed a two-and-a-half-minute video of scenes from her years as prime minister, with Webber's music as accompaniment. At Tory headquarters, the video is known as "It's Great to be Great." Thatcher has no quibble with that. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

The Bad Old Days

Brian De Palma likes old movies and has spent much of his career trying to make them. At last he has made a good one. *The Untouchables*, derived from the TV series and some books about it, raises De Palma to the height of his movie-buff devotion, to the point where he behaves like an old-time Hollywood director reincarnated. His new film resembles an early 1930s automobile restyled by a 1980s designer, with the old car quite discernible and the modernization quite snappy.

The Untouchables
(Paramount)

The *Untouchables* material reached theater screens once before as *The Scarface Mob* (1958), which was a pilot film for the TV series that was also released theatrically. I missed it. (De Palma's own deplorable *Scarface* four years ago had nothing to do with Capone.) For his new film, De Palma asked the theater poet of Chicago, David Mamet, to do the screenplay. This was the first piece of acute casting. It's impossible to say how much of the handling of scenes is Mamet's work, but surely the structure owes much to him, and of course the dialogue is his. Mamet, in a way, anticipated De Palma's direction. The rule seems to have been: "Don't change the old reliable Gangster Picture: just do it better." Mamet plunged into the middle of the mainstream and succeeded. The old-timers had more freedom than Mamet. Ben Hecht's script for the 1932 *Scarface* used incest to sizzle it along. The Thew-Glasmon-Bright script for *The Public Enemy* (1931)—still my favorite gangster picture—was composed of a series of plaque-like scenes almost like a medieval mystery play. Mamet, revisiting the past, could not alter it. He sought no "angle": he took the Capone-Ness story as a great chance to revel in the most conventional aspects of a genre.

Still, there are perceptible Mamet touches. Some examples: the language of a seasoned old cop, Jim Malone, who joins Ness's small anti-Capone force (with Mamet's ear, it can hardly be an accident that Malone rhymes with Capone); the language of Scarface Al himself, which dumps on us like a truckload of rocks; a fierce hand-to-hand fight between two gray-haired men, Malone and a police captain; Ness's wry last line—the last line of the picture after the smoke has cleared from these Prohibition battles. A reporter asks him what he'll do if Prohibition is repealed, and he says, "I think I'll take a drink."

The story is simple enough, plentiful enough. In 1930 Eliot Ness, a Treasury agent, arrives in Chicago with wife and child and sets out, against odds and apathy, to nail Capone. He recruits three loyal aides, one of them Italian to show us that not all Italians are gangsters. (Racial epithets are, quite accurately for the time, part of the invective throughout.) Ness meets setbacks in tactics and in law; eventually, with the help of the Treasury accountant who is one of his team, he proceeds with the tax-evasion approach that finally puts Capone in prison. Many gunfights; many raids; many confrontations. There's even a "Western" episode on the Canadian border—with a troop of Mounties on the skyline à la John Ford—as Ness and friends ride to seize a truck convoy of whiskey. (No explanation of how these city types learned to ride.) The ending is foretold not only by history but by the movies. What matters is how we get there.

This De Palma knew and relished. Many of his visual fandangos in the past, like the museum sequence in *Dressed to Kill*, were film-school smart-aleckings. They're not entirely gone from *The Untouchables*: a heavy reference to the *Potemkin* baby carriage in a railroad station shoot-out; a pullback from a shot of two men talking behind a window to reveal that they are in a plane. But most of the time, this time, the subject has carried De Palma from mere showing off to some virtuosity—in other words, the showing off is done so well that it helps. He uses Panavision and justifies it in the very first shot. The wide screen is filled with an overhead view of a barber shop, looking straight down on a barber chair, its occupant's face swathed in a towel, the chair surrounded by henchmen and reporters. It is brilliantly lighted (by Stephen H. Burum), immensely detailed, loaded with promise. The split-second effect is of full-color magic archaeology: the mound of intervening years has been swept away and we are looking into the 1930 life of Chicago, the fief of Al Capone—who is the man in the chair.

Shot after shot, cut after cut, De Palma rarely falters. A bundle of newspapers plunks onto a red carpet outside a hotel, and a bellboy bustles out to get them; Ness and Malone converse in a church, and the camera looks up past them at the gorgeous ceiling; the camera tracks along the outside of a ground-floor apartment as a hit man watches his victim through the windows. And after a machine gun starts spitting, there's a shock cut to a close profile of an opera tenor in clown costume singing "Vesti la giubba." Hitchcock and Hawks are still very much at De Palma's back, but they might have approved compositions like the one in which Ness alone confronts Capone and his bodyguards on a grand

FILMS WORTH SEEING

My Life as a Dog. A 12-year-old Swedish boy learns about life and a couple of deaths in this delicate, funny, sad story. (Reviewed 5/25/87)

Prick Up Your Ears. The career and sudden end of the English playwright Joe Orton. Exceptional dialogue, acting, and directing. (4/20/87)

Rosa Luxemburg. Margarethe von Trotta's screenplay is not as good as her directing or Barbara Sukowa's performance, but they make this version of Luxemburg's life gripping. (5/18/87)

Tampopo. Wild Japanese comedy about, among other things, food, sex, a young widow who runs a noodle shop, and the truck driver who helps her to success. (6/1/87)

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hotel staircase and the action seems to pour forward onto Ness. In further deference to the past, De Palma even uses a device I haven't seen in years. When a person falls through the air these days, we see only the start and the finish. But when one of these gangsters is shoved off a roof, we get a close-up matte shot of the falling man while the building races away behind him.

Kevin Costner, who is Ness, doesn't come on like a ball of fire, but his strength and humor keep growing. Sean Connery plays the aging Malone as if he had done James Bond and all the other roles just to season himself for this one, to make the old cop both true and retrospective. Charles Martin Smith is right as the wistful, heroic accountant. Andy Garcia is snakelike as the fourth member of the Ness quartet. Robert De Niro, whose first film appearance was in De Palma's *Greetings* (1968), gives Capone the clumsy theatricality of a barbarian who wants to be a ham, and also gives him the insane fury that we remember from *Mean Streets*, still frightening.

It used to be a critical commonplace to compare gangster films to Westerns. The comparison is now historical because Westerns have faded so badly. (Two possible explanations for that fade: space flicks now supply a setting for black-and-white morality and broad action; attitudes toward Indians have changed.) But the gangster, whatever his new name or game, is not only still present in our society, his presence is swollen—so much that the underworld sometimes seems to be the real world while the rest of us dawdle in the deer park of criminal kings. Forty years ago Robert Warshow wrote: "Most Americans have never seen a gangster. What matters is that the gangster *as an experience of art* is universal to Americans." The facts of our life and art experience, fueled additionally now by television, make *The Untouchables* simultaneously relevant yet quaint. With its battles over mere booze, with Capone's brazen antics, De Palma's film seems in a ghastly way almost innocent. By now the slouching beast has made it to Bethlehem.

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN ON MUSIC

The Music Man

Scenes from the life of a maestro:

"Felicia accompanied Bernstein on his 1970 trip to London. It was then that he told a group of friends that he loved his wife so much that he didn't know how he could get along without her. Then he spent two-and-a-half weeks in Rome without her. While there, he participated in a homosexual orgy arranged by Gore Vidal."

"A friend who was in Felicia's room after the diagnosis [of terminal cancer] had been made says that when the doctor arrived, Bernstein intercepted him on his walk to her bed, pointing out what he thought was a small growth on his own nose."

"Men ... report that when they emerged from Bernstein's bed in the morning, with Bernstein still asleep, [Helen] Coates [Bernstein's one-time teacher and then devoted assistant] asked for their names and numbers in the event the maestro wanted to call on them again."

"Autograph hunters besieged him [in San Francisco] and one evening, backstage, he began to receive in his dressing room wearing nothing more than a jockstrap."

"[While composer in residence at Indiana University in 1982] Bernstein wrote a parody to be sung to the tune 'A Bicycle Built for Two.' Dedicated to the dean of the school of music of Indiana University, Bernstein sang it to him at the party. The words went this way: 'Deany, weeny, show me your penie, do!/I'm all steamy, all for the love of you!/You want to see mine? It's teeny!/But that's 'cause I'm a sheeny—/But you're a goy,/And boy oh boy!/I'll just betcha it's built for two!' "

Joan Peyser means business. Her new life of Leonard Bernstein, *Bernstein: A Biography* (Beech Tree Books/William Morrow), is uglier than a mere kiss-and-tell story. "Friends" and colleagues did more than kiss and have more to tell. There's lots of Trouble in Tahiti; much *tsoris* in the Age of Anxiety; numerous dives in this West Side Story. Lenny Bernstein—America's Music Man, the first American-born, American-trained conductor of a major American orchestra, brilliant teacher, charismatic television personality, compelling writer, successful Broadway composer and still-aspiring concert-hall composer—Lenny Bernstein is venal, narcissistic, egocentric, disgusting, indulgent, disarms his enemies with effusively phony praise, and eats chicken by picking up the whole fowl in his hands.

So great are the apparent contradictions between the public achievements and the private persona that Peyser herself is torn between celebration and denigration. The book is conflicted: it meanders, omits, drifts, and jumps. It is as if every nasty nugget she found had to be inserted, no matter where, no matter how trivial (a friend sings during a car ride and Lenny is sullen: more proof of his narcissism). Crude Freudianism rears its head ("The greater the artist, the more powerful the sexual drive, whether suppressed or not"). Unsupported interpretation makes an appearance ("He must have viewed white tie and tails as a symbol of a degenerate capitalist society's musical mores").

This tawdriness and distortion is all the more peculiar because in her previous books, and as an editor of the *Musical Quarterly*, Joan Peyser has not been so stricken. There is even a very forceful psychological portrait of Bernstein at the heart of this sometimes distasteful book; it is built around the figure of the father. Sam, Lenny's father, who made a fortune with a permanent wave machine for hair stylists, was in later life effusive about his son: "You don't expect your child to be a Moses, a Maimonides, or a Leonard Bernstein," was the way the Talmudically trained immigrant ranked his son. But before Lenny's triumphant debut at the age of 25, substituting for an ill Bruno Walter at the podium of the New York Philharmonic, Sam was not

NEXT WEEK

Edmund Morgan on the Constitution.

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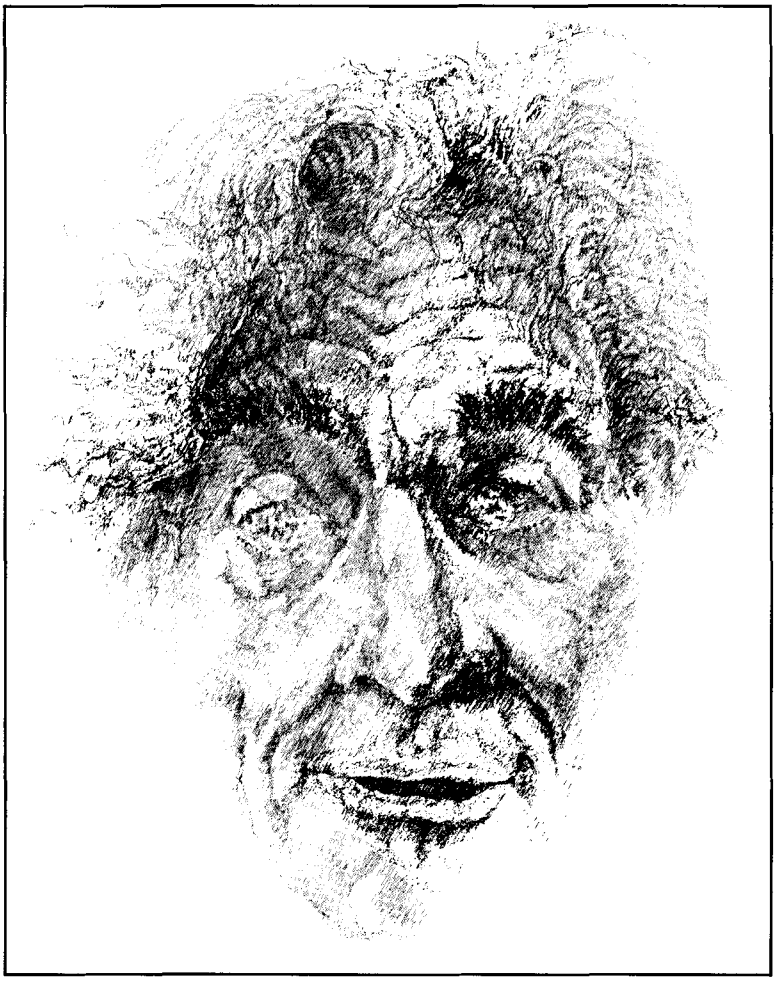
an advocate of Lenny's musical career; his son claimed that his father actually opposed him every inch of the way.

And so this prodigiously talented musician heard almost no music in his house before the age of ten, but later found other paternal figures who could not help but be amazed at his extraordinary musical sensitivity, and his ability to play and nearly memorize scores at sight. Peyser restrains herself from referring to Oedipus, but the drama is played out again and again, with a roster of some of the great conductors of the last 50 years, with figures Bernstein himself has called his "fathers"—with Dimitri Mitropoulos, the homosexual conductor who promised young Lenny everything but delivered little, whose cross Bernstein still wears around his neck, whose conductorial habits he adopted, and whose job he later took; with Artur Rodzinski, who as conductor of the New York Philharmonic was searching for an assistant in 1943: "I finally asked God whom I shall take and God said, 'Take Bernstein'" (God may have changed his mind later, since Rodzinski tried to fire his protégé); with Fritz Reiner, who taught Bernstein rigorously but later called him a "shit"; and, of course, with Serge Koussevitzky, who became his protector at Tanglewood, his supporter in Boston, and whose cuff links Bernstein still kisses before every performance.



DRAWING BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Koussevitzky, it seems, for years objected to Bernstein's extraordinary success on Broadway, and wanted to steer him down the sexually straight and musically narrow. Bernstein's escapades—like writing the music for *On the Town*—were, to Koussevitzky, mere distractions from the more respectable conducting career. He objected to his disciple's other predilections as well ("I think Copland is pederast," he told Lenny in 1946. "I think David Diamond is pederast. I think you, too, may be pederast.") Right after Koussevitzky's death, Peyser points out, his authority may have even been victorious. Bernstein wed Felicia Montealegre, to whom he had once before been engaged; he was "married in Koussevitzky's white suit and wore Koussevitzky's white shoes." He then figuratively filled Koussevitzky's shoes, taking his place as consultant and visiting professor at Brandeis. But this was, as Peyser makes clear, just temporary stability in a soap opera of a life.

In her last book, a biography of Pierre Boulez, Peyser also found the battle against the father to be fundamental—but there it connected directly to the musical life of her subject, to his attitudes toward the modernist tradition and his position in the postwar avant-garde. Here, Peyser is more confounded by the same theme, for though she thoroughly documents it—in the dedications of pieces, in Bernstein's career, in the programs of his compositions, in his reckless self-disgust—it begins to seem like so much gossip, elevating a psychological theme without justifying anything more than voyeuristic interest at Bernstein's crude manipulation of others. It is as if—to pick grander examples—Beethoven's brutal treatment of his nephew, Stravinsky's calculating determination, Liszt's profligacy were treated as the central facts about these composers. Peyser leaves Bernstein's own achievement as an artist so unclear, his position as "celebrity" so entrenched, that we are never fully sure why he is worth so much attention or denigration.

In fact, the book is torn between high and low, between the considered tones of a musical chronicle and the steamy tales of a potboiler. This is ironic, because here highness or lowness really is all: it was a central issue of Bernstein's life and of the American musical culture he transformed. How could the vernacular and the refined be combined? Broadway and La Scala? Television and the Philharmonic? *Trouble in Tahiti* and the Norton lectures? These questions have been nagging Bernstein all his life, and Peyser begins to consider them, but is caught up herself in the judgment of the fathers. Like Koussevitzky she takes the high road, judging Lenny sternly (a "terrorist of the mind," she cavalierly calls him at one point); but she cheers on the low in the art, believing that Bernstein listened too much to his musical father figures, trying too hard for the career in the concert hall, accepting too much their scorn of Broadway and movies. In her view, one of Bernstein's failures was not continuing with his greatest successes, not following up on *West Side Story*, leaving, too quickly, the world of *On the Town*, not being true to the great vernacular American musical tradition. As if compensating for sympathy lost elsewhere, here she becomes positively honorific:

> One fact transcends all the others: that, in the mid-1950s, four remarkable artists

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> came together and made a work that is a landmark in the cultural history of the United States. *West Side Story* is somewhat reminiscent of a collaboration almost 50 years before . . . [on] *Le Sacre du Printemps*.

West Side Story is treated with the kind of solemnity (as are other analogies between Broadway and the European avant-garde) that nearly crippled the musical on the recent Deutsche Grammophon recording, which refuses to accept the accomplishment within its limits. But that accomplishment should be more than enough. (See "Upper West Side Story," TNR, July 15 & 22, 1985.)

It is also enough that during two decades Bernstein brought to the musical life of New York (and by extension, of the country) passion and energy that it hasn't seen since. And, as Peyser notes, while leading the newly formed New York City Symphony at City Center during the mid-'40s, and receiving no salary, Bernstein created a true alternative to the New York Philharmonic, conducting rarely heard music by Stravinsky, Hindemith, Piston, Chavez, Harris, Barber, Milhaud, Bartók, Vaughan Williams, and Ives. Later, as director of the Philharmonic, his recording projects, his Young People's Concerts, his programming, and his conducting style (excesses and all) made for an era that came in for its share of critical knocks but that can only be thought of as golden compared with our own. (The musicians of the orchestra are wont to agree.) His television broadcasts from the same period were near masterpieces of musical pedagogy; some were collected in *The Joy of Music*, which is probably the best book of "music appreciation" ever written.

Peyser, like Bernstein himself, never connects the high and the low, the great achievements with the great failures, the banal compositions with the profound conducting, the high-toned ethical invocations with the grimy selfishness of untempered desire, the exquisite musical analyses with the hyped-up fakery of the Norton lectures (a series so intellectually confused even the authorities were fooled). She has little to say about the music or the conducting or the lectures—returning only again and again to the life's sordid problems and their disguise in Bernstein's musical programs. But there is an important observation about one of Bernstein's worst works—the trite *Mass* that opened the Kennedy Center in Washington. This major "theater piece"—based on the Catholic mass, but including along the way elements of the counterculture, echoes of the Hebrew kaddish, and encounter session confessions—Peyser recognizes as a musical autobiography.

For *Mass* begins with a young guitarist singing "A Simple Song"—"God loves all simple things." As he proceeds, the guitarist gradually becomes "vested" as the weighty cloaks of the priesthood are laid on his shoulders. As mature Celebrant, he is attacked by his people for not having delivered paradise. The Celebrant then smashes the holy vessels, tears off his robes, and rejoins the people. The drama has all the elements of Bernstein's life—his pastoral fantasies, his ambitions, his rise to aesthetic priesthood, his disgust at the very notion of moral and religious authority (his "radical chic"), his relentless invocation of "love."

Mass, though, is representative of Bernstein's dilemma and ours. Bernstein deliberately turns a once highly structured religious ritual into farce. It takes place in no tradition, without bounds. All is "eclectic"; but without any ground, all becomes mere showmanship and sentimentality.

It is difficult not to feel something similar about Bernstein's career—and about the traditions into which he entered. For though he is, as a conductor, one of the best we have, he does not convince us that we have that much. He was the great American promise, who was to establish a new tradition; but he could hardly have said what that tradition was, or what its community would be. There was no mass even to parody or to resist. So instead, confusion, showmanship, and sentimentality abound. Bernstein, rather than elevating or establishing a tradition, has elevated and established himself: all is ego. The conducting is still brilliant, even as it feeds on self-celebration. But if Peyser's unworthy book does nothing else, it demonstrates another stage in the evolution of the virtuoso. He is no longer priest or prophet; he is nihilist.

Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and the history of the cartoon.

COMICS AND CATASTROPHE

BY ADAM GOPNIK

IF YOU ASK educated people to tell you everything they know about the history and psychology of cartooning, they will probably offer something like this: cartoons (taking caricature, political cartooning, and comic strips all together as a single form) are a relic of the infancy of art, one of the earliest forms of visual communication (and therefore, by implication, especially well suited to children); they are naturally funny and popular; and their gift is above all for the diminutive.

But these beliefs about cartooning are not merely incomplete; they are in almost every respect the direct reverse of the truth. Cartoons are not a primordial form. They are the relatively novel offspring of an extremely sophisticated visual culture. The caricature, from which all other kinds of cartooning descend, first appears around 1600 in Italy, within the circle of Bernini and the Carracci—and then not as a popular form, a visual slang, but as an in-group dialect, an aristocratic code.

Some of the devices that belong to cartoon and caricature might seem to be very ancient. There may appear to be precedents in Egyptian and Assyrian art for the device of combining human and animal elements in one figure; and we find distorted or grotesque human faces on everything from Greek pots to Gothic cathedrals. But these ancient practices have essentially nothing in common

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with apparently similar devices in modern cartoon and caricature. Before 1600 the tradition of combining human and animal elements in a single figure was a tradition of splicing—usually placing an animal head on a human body in order to symbolize reverence (as in Egyptian art) or contempt (as in certain Roman graffiti). It was only around 1600 that the tradition of splicing human and animal elements was replaced by a tradition of melding those elements together in such a way that the abstract likeness of man and animal was made into an animated visual fusion.

Similarly, grotesques before 1600 were never portraits: Roman and Gothic grotesques are meant to depict sub- or transhuman types. They are not meant to be striking, much less affectionate, likenesses of individuals. Distortion of the human face for the purposes of caricature, rather than the creation of monsters or satyrs, and the device of melding, as against splicing, human and animal features together are unique to the cartoon tradition, and are at most 300 years old (though, inevitably, certain kinds of simple caricature and cartoon are haunted by earlier "grotesque" traditions).

It took more than a century before the caricature was reimagined, in England in the late 18th century, as a form of popular political and social satire. And the "diminutive" cartoon, the kind of cartoon we associate in this country with the work of Walt Disney, is not a simple extension of the cartoon tradition, but a real departure from it, an American invention of the same vintage as contract bridge or the NFL.

OUR MISTAKEN beliefs about cartooning testify to the cartoon's near magical ability, whatever its real history, to persuade us of its innocence. Even though cartoons are in fact recent and cosmopolitan, we respond to them as if they were primordial. If we could understand why this happens, we might begin to understand the special cognitive and even biological basis of our response to the form. That educated people don't know very much about cartooning just shows that we don't usually think it worthwhile to educate people about it. But this situation is changing. That, for the first time, educated people are coming to have an opinion about cartoons is largely due to the influence of one remarkable work, Art Spiegelman's book *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*.

By now everyone has heard something about *Maus*. It has been widely and enthusiastically reviewed, has sold a surprisingly large number of copies, has been nominated for a National Book Critics' Circle Award. And by now everyone knows what *Maus* is: the Holocaust Comic Book. This label is one of those oxymorons—like "non-fiction novel" and "rock opera"—that put reviewers into a kind of hypnotic trance. Rising from their baskets and swaying back and forth, they worry ponderously about categories rather than values. *Maus* is a work in progress, a serial that has appeared in installments in Spiegelman's magazine *RAW*, a magazine of what used to be called "underground" cartooning. (*RAW* is to New York painting in the '80s, which often draws heavily on cartoon imagery, what *Minotaure* was to Paris painting in the '30s—a kind of *prêt-à-porter* catalog of avant-garde form.)

ON ONE LEVEL, *Maus* is an autobiographical documentary about Vladek Spiegelman, the artist's father, and his experiences in Poland as a Jew during the Second World War. *Maus* begins with Art visiting Vladek today in Rego Park, Queens. "We weren't very close," Art admits. (We learn later that the two men had been torn apart by the suicide of Art's mother, Anja, a few years before.) In part to encourage a warmer relationship with his father, in part because it seems important for its own sake, in part because it offers a new avenue for Art's work, Art decides to write a book about Vladek's experiences during the war, experiences that, we discover early on, took him into Auschwitz. The story then moves freely from Rego Park today to Poland during the horror, as we both follow the track of Art's inquisition of his father and move back into the lost world Vladek's memories evoke.

Vladek, we are informed, came from a family of well-off Polish Jewish merchants. As a young man he married the plain and troubled daughter of a much wealthier family. (It is a measure of Spiegelman's extraordinary intelligence and delicacy as a kind of novelist that he manages to make his father's mixed motives in this marriage perfectly apparent without seeming censorious.) When the war breaks out, Vladek joins the army. (There is a hilarious flashback to the Spiegelman family's distinguished history of draft evasion.) Vladek participates in a single, doomed battle with the Polish army, in which, quite unremorsefully, he kills a wounded German soldier ("I was glad to do something"). He is sent to a prison camp, where, interestingly enough, his Jewishness doesn't seem to single him out for especially sadistic treatment. Then he is released, and returns to his family. Practical and exceptionally enterprising, he begins to build up his business again—and then, in its oddly impersonal way, the Nazi "noose begins to tighten" around the throats of Vladek and his family.

Spiegelman makes the bureaucratic sadism of the Germans uncannily vivid—all the steps and reroutings and sortings and resortings that preceded mass murder. *Maus* is a work of hyperrealist detail. Nobody could have anticipated that a comic book about the Holocaust could have told so much about the way this particular endgame was played out: precisely how the black market worked within the ghettos; exactly what happened, in sequence, when the Germans occupied a town; why in 1943 a Jew would have thought Hungary a haven, and how he would have tried to get his family there. The book version of *Maus*, published by Pantheon in 1986, ends with Vladek and Anja in Auschwitz, and the latest installment in *RAW* picks up their story again in the camp.

At the same time, we see Vladek as he tells his story today. Vladek is not exactly Elie Wiesel. He is a pinched, mean-spirited, and hilariously miserly old man. In the middle of telling Art how Anja's parents were the first among the family to be sent off to Auschwitz and the ovens, he breaks off the conversation to pick something up from the street. Art: "What did you pick up?" Vladek: "Telephone wire. This it's very hard to find. Inside it's *little* wires. It's good for tying things." Art: "You *always* pick up trash! Can't you just *buy* wire?" Vladek: "Pssh. Why always you want to *buy* when you can find!? Anyway, this wire they don't have it in any stores. I'll give to you some wire. You'll see how useful it is." Art: "No thanks! Just tell me what happened with Haskell." And then we are back in Poland.

NO SUMMARY can do justice to Spiegelman's narrative skill—his feeling for the dramatic juxtaposition of hideous and comic material; his rendering of the exasperated love of a son for his inadequate, persecuted father; above all his ear for voices. No writer in any genre since the young Philip Roth has managed

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to make the Jewish speech of several generations sound so fresh or uncannily convincing, an achievement that's all the more impressive since it has been done within the incredibly tight confines of comic-strip balloons.

But none of this is what has made *Maus* famous in its time. That notoriety is due to a simple, hallucinatory device: all the characters in *Maus* are drawn as animals—the Jews as mice, the Poles as pigs, the Germans as cats, and the Americans as dogs. It's extremely important to understand that *Maus* is in no way an animal fable or an allegory like Aesop or *Animal Farm*. The Jews are Jews who just happen to be depicted as mice, in a peculiar, idiosyncratic convention. There isn't any allegorical dimension in *Maus*, just a convention of representation. In fact, at one key moment in the book real mice, animal mice, appear, and the Anja and Vladek characters, though drawn as mice, respond exactly as real people would respond to real rodents.

But the cartoon device in *Maus* has been widely seen not as a way of organizing the horror vividly and effectively, but as a way of denying the horror altogether, of turning remembrance into folktale. It's even been said that *Maus* marks the end of real Holocaust literature, the moment when, in the hands of the survivors' children, the horror settles into folktale and fable. Or else, in the hands of those few reviewers committed to the "underground" cartoon as a form, Spiegelman is seen not as an artist working within the best traditions of the cartoon, but as the Spartacus of the underground comic strip, the hero of a movement that has emancipated the cartoon from mere cuteness—liberated the seven dwarfs from the Disney mines, so to speak, and turned them into underground men of a better and different kind.

Both these views are fundamentally ahistorical. Working not against the grain of the cartoon but within its richest inheritance, and exploring the deepest possibilities unique to the form, Spiegelman has reminded us what the cartoon is capable of: *Maus* is an act not of invention, but of restoration. And in rediscovering the serious and even tragic possibilities of the comic strip and the cartoon, Spiegelman has found another way to do what all artists who have made the Holocaust their subject have tried to do: to stylize horror without aestheticizing it.

RIGHT AWAY, WE WENT. THE SANITARIUM WAS INSIDE CZECHOSLOVAKIA, ONE OF THE MOST EXPENSIVE AND BEAUTIFUL IN THE WORLD.
I REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE ALMOST ARRIVED, WE PASSED A SMALL TOWN.
OI!
EVERYBODY - EVERY JEW FROM THE TRAIN - GOT VERY EXCITED AND FRIGHTENED.
LOOK!
IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF 1938 - BEFORE THE WAR - HANGING HIGH IN THE CENTER OF TOWN, IT WAS A NAZI FLAG..
HERE WAS THE FIRST TIME I SAW, WITH MY OWN EYES, THE SWASTIKA.

FROM *MAUS: A SURVIVOR'S TALE* (PANTHEON, 1986; © ART SPIEGELMAN)

Mostly we think about the problems of art about the Holocaust in literary terms, and not sufficiently about how the problem has been addressed in the visual arts. It is in the visual arts, after all, that memorials to national disasters and martyrdoms have traditionally been made. Some of the terms and concepts evolved in art criticism and art history may help us to understand what is, after all, an iconoclastic dispute, a debate about the legitimacy of images. To borrow a distinction from Meyer Schapiro, we want art about the Holocaust to be both narrative and iconic. We want to be told or shown exactly what happened, but because we know in advance that what we're going to see is more horrible than anything we can imagine, we want the style of the depiction to be elevated and even a little mysterious, like great religious art.

Even the few inarguably great public statements about suffering in our time seem inadequate to the events of the Holocaust. If we were told, for instance, that Picasso's *Guernica* is a memorial to, say, Lublin, I think we would feel a little disgusted. *Guernica*, after all, is an elegy to the losing side in a conflict: the painting takes sides, and has a point. But the uniquely horrible thing about what happened to the Jews in Europe is that the "sides" existed only in the paranoid fantasies of their persecutors. (And in *Guernica*, as in *The Charnel House* of 1945, we can't help but feel that we're being had a little. Picasso's great achievement in art was to ask us to read "distortions" of human form not merely as horrific, but as capable of expressing an enormous range of emotion. In their way these pictures are too beautiful.)

Of course, the notion that modern warfare has brought with it a new kind of evil—not merely cruel, but senseless—does not begin with what happened in Europe in the '40s, and neither does the corresponding notion that the traditional forms of elegiac art are in some sense inadequate. Goya saw clearly that the traditional forms of ennobled suffering were utterly incapable

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of dealing with a new kind of horror—and he was the first to see, too, that it was the tradition of the cartoon, of all things, that might offer a solution. What may strike us most about Goya's etchings in *The Horrors of War* or *The Third of May* is their documentary realism, but, as E. H. Gombrich has pointed out, it wasn't firsthand experience that gave form to Goya's art; rather, it was the tradition of popular imagery, of caricature and political cartoon, that Goya borrowed and reimagined as the appropriate armature on which to hang his indignation.

One of the most frightening and memorable of Goya's devices in *The Horrors of War* is borrowed from the popular tradition of making men look like animals and animals look like men—the tradition of "physiognomic comparison." What's most striking about the major examples of the tradition, even before Goya, is how fascinatingly ambiguous they are, and how essentially humorless. If we look at, say, Charles Lebrun's *Comparisons* of 1667, the most encyclopedic of all the essays in physiognomy, we seem to be seeing something proto-Darwinian in its vision. Are these images of the bestiality latent in man, or of the humanity latent in beasts? Even those animal types that have become, in our time, stock instances of the diminutive cartoon (rabbits and mice) have in Lebrun's drawings an utter gravity and melancholy. The faces of Lebrun's little humanized rodents not only look uncannily like the faces in *Maus*; they also look like us. They seem, for all their obvious grotesqueness, so much more modern than any of the portraits Lebrun painted precisely because of their ambivalence—not man secure in a social role but man staring into the abyss of his own possible bestiality.

Thus the tradition of the cartoon, far from being essentially diminutive and escapist, has been from its beginnings well suited to expressing certain kinds of high seriousness. Again and again throughout the history of the cartoon, serious artists have drawn not just on the satiric potential of the form, but on its ability to stylize a certain kind of horror as well, the horror that occurs not when human beings behave wickedly but when they lose (or are robbed of) their humanity altogether. This is a tradition Lebrun articulated and Goya ennobled. (It is also the tradition of cartoon that Picasso drew on in his political comic strip of the '30s, *The Dream and Lie of Franco*.)

What needs explaining, then, isn't the emancipation of the cartoon tradition by Spiegelman and the *RAW* stable of artists, but its previous domestication. Stephen Jay Gould has explained the essential psychological device that allowed the artists of the Disney studios, in particular, to transform humanized animals from totemic beasts into pets. Gould

FROM *COMPARISONS* BY CHARLES LEBRUN (1667)

demonstrates that Mickey gradually became more and more "neotenic" as time went on; that is, he came to have more and more of the features of human infants: large forehead, floppy joints, head out of proportion to body size, and so on. Mickey, in short, came increasingly to look like a human baby, and, as Gould goes on to suggest, this transformation turned the cartoon mouse into a kind of red flag waved at the most basic of human instincts. We are prewired, it seems, to respond with passionate affection to anything that has a certain set of infantile features; the anonymous artists of the Disney studio had forged a key that fit a primal lock in the human mind.

What Gould didn't point out (and had no need to) was how utterly discontinuous this discovery was with the rest of the history of cartooning. The Disney invention was so astonishingly successful that in some respects it effectively expunged any other kind of cartooning, or any other potential for the cartoon, from the memory of educated people. We see here the source of the paradox with which we began: the neotenic cartoon has overwhelmed not just all other kinds of cartoons, but our memory of all other kinds of cartoons.

This was possible, in part, because at a deeper level cartoons and caricature have always had more direct access to basic types of human cognition than almost any other kind of drawing. Some cognitive psychologists theorize that caricatures and cartoons are so memorable because their external forms in some way mirror the internal structure of our mental representations, the idealized and schematized mental imagery that our minds use to presort and structure perception. The mind's eye, they argue, in effect sees caricatures when it looks at the world and sees cartoons when it tries to remember what it has seen. The discovery of caricature, on this view, is as much an episode in the history of psychology—a fundamental discovery about the way the mind works—as it is an episode in the history of art.

I do not invoke Goya and Picasso to provide *Maus* with a tony pedigree. *Maus* is, by comparison, visually timid and even a little crude. In fact, *Maus* is considerably less daring, as drawing and design, than almost anything else in *RAW*, and less daring than much of Spiegelman's own earlier work. (An episode of an earlier Spiegelman strip, "Prisoner of Hell Planet," is inserted into *Maus* to make this plain.) The drawing here is, even by Spiegelman's own standards, deliberately folklike, stiff and unvaried.

If *Maus* depended for its effect only on the cartoon device, it would not be much more than an interesting curiosity. But *Maus* draws its power not from its visual style alone, but rather from the tension between its words and pictures, between the detail of its narration and dialogue and the hallucinatory fantasy of its images. At the heart of our understanding (or our lack of under-

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standing) of the Holocaust is our sense that this is both a human and an inhuman experience. We know that it happened to people like us, but we also know that what happened to them is not what happens to people, that what happened was not just discontinuous with the rest of human history, but also with our notion of what it is to be a person, and of how people behave. In order to show that these events are in some way sacred to us, we have to indicate, in art, that they are at once part of human history and outside it.

This overlay of the human and the inhuman is exactly what *Maus*, with its odd form, is extraordinarily able to depict. On the one hand this is entirely a history of the motives and desires of particular people, the story of Vladek and Anja's hundred individual decisions, failures, betrayals, and disappointments. On the other hand it is a history in which all human intention has been reduced to the hunted animal's instinct for self-preservation, in which all will and motive has been degraded to reflex. The heart-wrenching pathos of *Maus* lies in its retrospective, historical sense: Art, drawing *Maus*, knows that Vladek and Anja are finally as helpless and doomed as mice fleeing cats—but *they* still think that they are people, with the normal human capacity for devising schemes and making bargains.

Maus thus gives form to something essential to our understanding of the Holocaust. It is both loving documentary and brutal fable, a mix of compassion and stoicism. This is the consequence of its strange form, which pays perfect and unerring respect to the fate of particular people caught up in the horror, and at the same time makes it plain that the horror cannot really be understood or explained as a sum of individual actions and desires. Our fear about the depiction of the Holocaust is not only that it will be trivialized, but also that it will be assimilated to the Western tradition of tragedy, that organizing it will allow us in some sense to dismiss it—to leave the theater of history, purged. But with its seemingly bizarre juxtaposition of visual and literary struggles, *Maus* manages to give dignity to the sufferers without suggesting that their suffering had any "meaning" in a sense that in some way ennobled the sufferers, or that their agony has a transcendent element because it provides some catharsis for those of us who are told about, or are shown, their suffering.

Spiegelman's animal metaphor captures something crucial about the psychology of Holocaust survivors. Those few I have met are remarkably articulate about their story, but they are interestingly uncurious about the motives of their persecutors. They do indeed seem to see them as cats, as natural and unthinking predators who simply do what they are born to do. But the Germans weren't cats. They didn't have to do what they did. The cartoon form can supply a perfect mix of literary and visual metaphor, but metaphors aren't explanations.

If *Maus* is a nearly magical description of what happened—if it manages to sum up the experience of the Holocaust, for the survivors and their children, with as much power and as little pretension as any other work I can think of—it still must be said that the book succeeds so well in part because it evades the central *moral* issue of the Holocaust: How could people do such things to other people? The problem with the animal metaphor is not that it is demeaning to the mice, but that it lets the cats off too easily.

BIRD'S HEAD HAGGADAH (BEZALEL NATIONAL ART MUSEUM, JERUSALEM)

There is also a deeper level of image magic at work in *Maus*, which accounts for both its power and its extraordinary fit with its subject. I have mentioned earlier that a tradition of "spliced" animal and human forms precedes the "melded" forms of caricature. The image of a human body with an animal head is one of the very oldest in art, and it occurs frequently for the same reason: not, as in the physiognomic tradition, to compare man and animal, but to symbolize the presence of the sacred. In a way that I am almost certain is completely unconscious, *Maus* is also haunted by the older tradition, and, particularly and strangely, by a peculiar Jewish variant of the older tradition.

Spiegelman's animal heads are, purposefully, much more uniform and mask-like than those of almost any other modern cartoonist. His mice, while they have distinct human expressions, all have essentially the same face. As a consequence, they suggest not just the condition of human beings forced to behave like animals, but also our sense that this story is too horrible to be presented unmasked. The particular animal "masks" Spiegelman has chosen uncannily recall and evoke one of the few masterpieces of Jewish religious art—the Bird's Head Haggadah of 13th-century Ashkenazi art. In this and related manuscripts, the Passover story is depicted using figures with the bodies of humans and heads of animals—small, common animals, usually birds.

Now, in one sense the problems that confronted the medieval Jewish illuminator and the modern Jewish artist of the Holocaust are entirely different. The medieval artist had a subject too holy to be depicted; the modern artist has a subject too horrible to be depicted. For the traditional illuminator, it is the ultimate sacred mystery that must somehow be shown without being shown; for the contemporary artist, it is the ultimate obscenity, the ultimate profanity, that must somehow be shown without being shown. But this obscenity, this profanity, has become our sacred subject, in the sense that our contemplation of it has

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become nearly liturgical.

Yet still we want a sacred art that isn't a transcendent art. We want an art whose stylizations are as much a declaration of inadequacy to their subject as they are of mystical transcendence. And this is the quality that *Maus* and the Bird's Head Haggadah, for all their differences, share: in both these Jewish works, the homely animal device is able to depict the sacred by a kind of comic indirection. The device is so potent precisely because it seems, at first, so disarming.

So the self-conscious element of primitivism in Spiegelman's drawing has the deepest affinity with the very small body of important Jewish art. It is an affinity that may help lead us to a better understanding of what a modern Jewish art can be, a Jewish art that leads away from Chagall and his levitating Hassidim, away from banal affinities rooted in sentimental imagery, from ersatz connections between ancient form and modern abstraction such as those made by modern Israeli artists who draw on Hebrew calligraphic traditions. The affinity between the medieval Jewish illuminators and Art Spiegelman may be rooted in a much more profound set of solutions—solutions that turn deliberately to the homely and the unpretentious, rather than to the transcendent and mystical, in order to depict the sacred.

One of the platitudes about modern art is that it exists in the face of the failure and dissolution of religious art. In some sense, of course, this is true. And yet the human need to see depicted all those things that used to be the province of religious art—the geography of good and evil, of heaven and hell—remains constant. The deeper preoccupation of modern art, from Matisse's Arcadia to Francis Bacon's infernal interiors, has been to find some secular visual language to fulfill that need. Cartoons reflect this preoccupation too, and have been surprisingly successful in making these images for us: images of Eden in the work of George Herriman and Winsor McCay, and now potent images of extreme horror in *Maus*. If all the old forms of religious art have gone into diaspora, there seem to be moments in heaven, and circles in hell, that have taken shelter in the comic strip.

THE IMPOTENCE OF BEING EARNEST

Richard Cobden: A Victorian Outsider
by Wendy Hinde

(Yale University Press, 376 pp., $30)

By definition, peripheral people are rarely to be found at the center of great events: it is the corridors of power, not the cloisters of impotence, that lead most surely and directly to Clio's halls of fame. Most British politicians who spent their public lives in protracted opposition have rightly been relegated to the footnotes of history, and those few who have not are very much the exceptions that prove the rule. On the far right, such figures as Bolingbroke, Lord George Bentinck, Sir Oswald Mosley, and Enoch Powell have generally been more insufferable than influential. And on the far left, men like Charles James Fox, John Bright, E. D. Morel, and Michael Foot have usually been so high-minded that their heads have invariably been in the clouds. It is to this second group that Richard Cobden belongs—a man rightly described by Walter Bagehot as an "outsider" and by A. J. P. Taylor as a "troublemaker."

At first glance, Cobden's truculent marginality seems difficult to explain, since he was in so many ways a quintessential Victorian. He was a self-made man, who succeeded in business by his own unaided efforts. He was the political spokesman of the middle classes, the most dynamic and ambitious element in the society of his day. And he achieved international renown as the leader of the Anti-Corn Law League, the most successful movement of popular protest in 19th-century Britain. Appropriately enough, he was commemorated in John Morley's two-volume biography as a private and public paragon, a great crusader, "true, wise, and just." Yet throughout his public life, Cobden remained on the sidelines, while the great game was played by other politicians. He sat in Parliament for barely 20 years, never passed a major piece of legislation, never held a Cabinet office or ran a large department, and left behind no lasting monument. As usual, it was the government men—Peel, Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone—who dominated the stage of history; Cobden played little more than a cameo part.

Wendy Hinde's new biography gives us a plausible picture of this peripheral person. Cobden was born in rural Sussex in 1804, the son of a minor and unsuccessful farmer. His childhood was deprived and impoverished, and his formal education took place at a school even more terrible than that endured by Nicholas Nickleby. Whether this helps explain Cobden's lifelong opposition to privilege and to bullying is not explored, but it seems very likely that it did. In such circumstances he was obliged to earn his living, and he eventually established himself in the calico printing business in Manchester. By the mid-1830s he was already publishing political pamphlets, which set out the opinions he was to hold all his life—implacable opposition to aristocratic government, sustained hostility to Britain's immoral foreign policy, abiding commitment to international peace and universal brotherhood, and an unshakable belief in the benevolent effects of free trade and commerce.

By the end of the decade Cobden had established himself as a major force in local politics, and in 1841 he was elected to the House of Commons as MP for Stockport. But his overriding concern was with the extra-Parliamentary Anti-Corn Law League, which he had founded in Manchester two years before. For Cobden, the protective tariff imposed on wheat by successive governments was a piece of blatant class legislation that put the well-being of the landowners before the general good of the country, and thus symbolized the unacceptable power and privilege of the aristocracy. By mobilizing middle-class opinion in a great crusade, Cobden hoped to coerce the landlord-dominated legislature into repealing the measure. For seven long years he devoted himself tirelessly and obsessively to this single cause, raising money, writing pamphlets, and delivering speeches to mass meetings up and down the country. Eventually, in 1846, the Corn Laws were indeed repealed, and the Tory prime minister, Sir Robert Peel, paid tribute to Cobden in the House of Commons as the man

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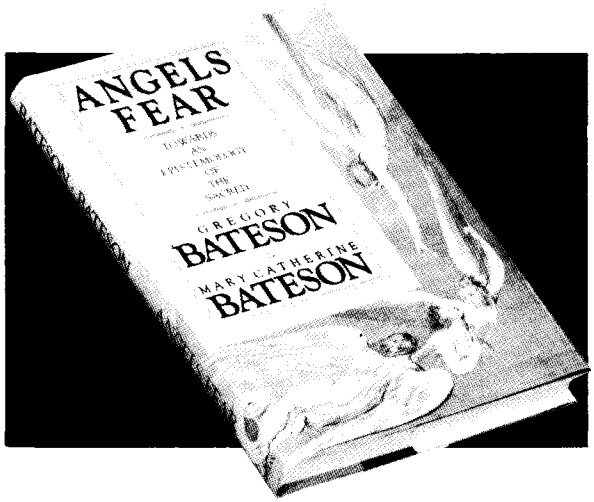
who had done the most to bring this major change about.

But although this established Cobden as a popular hero and an international celebrity, the rest of his career was fundamentally a disappointing anticlimax. In the gunboat world of Palmerstonian diplomacy, he soon became a forlorn voice crying in the moral wilderness, vainly protesting against imperialism, high defense spending, and interventionist foreign policy. When he courageously opposed the Crimean War, he forfeited the support of the bourgeoisie, and although he flirted with educational reform, free trade in land, and the extension of the franchise, he failed to establish himself as a working-class hero. His finances became increasingly precarious, there was a succession of family anxieties and sorrows, and his own health began to deteriorate badly. In 1857 he was turned out of his parliamentary seat, and although he soon returned to the Commons, he refused an invitation to join Palmerston's government two years later. The commercial treaty he negotiated with France temporarily allayed the fatalistic isolation of his later years, but on his death in 1865 he was rightly mourned for his attributes rather than for his achievements.

BEYOND QUESTION, Cobden was a courageous, well-meaning, and—according to his lights—patriotic man. So what had gone wrong? Part of the explanation undoubtedly resides in the limits and the contradictions of his own temperament. Like many an autodidact, his mind was too rigid, his horizons were too narrow, and his confidence in the wisdom of his own judgment was frequently misplaced. Although a self-styled man of reason and of peace, he was often too violent in his language, too impassioned in his denunciations, and too eager to impute base motives to his political opponents. His most ardent desire was to change the world, but his understanding of political realities was distinctly limited, and he would not soil his hands by taking power, even when it was offered to him. Despite the fact that he was unusually well-traveled in Europe and America, he had little understanding of the real complexities of international relations, and his belief in the universal benefits of unregulated private enterprise was utopian and naive in the extreme. And while he seemed to some the embodiment of Smilesian self-help, his business career was ultimately a disaster; he was eventually obliged to live off the proceeds of a public appeal.

So it is hardly surprising that Cobden was not exactly an outstanding success as a politician. He never really knew why he went into public life, and at many stages of his career he was quite at a loss for a policy or a program. He was a bad party man in the Commons, and he never acquired a solid or secure base of popular support outside: the landowners hated and feared him as a revolutionary, the middle classes deserted him when he espoused pacifism, and the workers disliked and distrusted him because he defended the factory system. Throughout his career, he could only concentrate on one great single issue at a time, but even the repeal of the Corn Laws scarcely justified such an approach to politics. It was Peel not Cobden, Parliament rather than the League, that was ultimately responsible for the measure. And, ironically enough, one of its major consequences was to make the world safe for aristocracy, the very social group Cobden most ardently aspired to destroy. Despite his strident and censorious attacks, the citadel of privilege remained inviolate for at least a further generation after his death.

Undeniably, Cobden's marginality can largely be explained in terms of tem-



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peramental shortcomings and political maladroitness. But underlying this is something much more fundamental, which Hinde does not explore, namely that Cobden was the representative of a class whose time—in political terms, at least—had not yet come. Beyond question, the industrial, provincial, entrepreneurial bourgeoisie were among the foremost makers of Victorian England. But by the middle of the 19th century, they were not yet numerous enough, confident enough, rich enough, or leisured enough to capture the levers of political power. Despite the Industrial Revolution, the passing of the Great Reform Act, and the repeal of the Corn Laws, mid-Victorian Britain remained an essentially patrician polity: the men of government, like the members of Parliament, came from the traditional ruling families, and they continued to do so for several decades after Cobden's death. Even if he had hungered for power, rather than thirsted for righteousness, it seems highly unlikely that Cobden would have accomplished much more than he actually did.

Yet despite his undeniable marginality in his own time and country, Cobden deserves some attention in our world, especially on this side of the Atlantic. For his overriding concerns were with what he believed to be the ethical burdens of national greatness, and with what he felt were the superior claims of moral leadership over military might. He passionately believed that non-intervention was the only honorable foreign policy; that disarmament was the one possible guarantee of world peace; that no nation should set itself up as the guardian of global order; and that his own country, as the richest, most powerful, and most fortunate, should set an example to the rest of humanity by its high-minded international behavior. Were Cobden alive today, and living in this country, it would not be difficult to predict what his political views—and his political fate—would be.

DAVID CANNADINE

David Cannadine is a fellow of Christ's College and a lecturer in history at Cambridge University.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

The Poems of Hart Crane edited by Marc Simon

(Liveright, 269 pp., $19.95)

Critics are timid creatures, hesitant to take up new artists until certain that no risk is involved. To be caught holding a card of the wrong suit or number apparently puts us in jeopardy, just as joining in a chorus of praise somehow brings us honor. Barring accidents, the famous seem to become always more deserving of fame, just as riches attract more riches. There is a sociology of admiration, and those who study it no doubt have trouble keeping a scientific impassivity before a process very often tragic in its consequences.

Hart Crane did not live long enough to witness the happy ending of the story of his own critical reception. Except for the dogged loyalty of some of his friends and demurrals from one or two independent spirits, the received opinion of Crane's poetry was that it had not fulfilled its promise and at best amounted to an interesting failure. Crane attracted poetic disciples and critical comment from the 1930s on, and yet a vexed, apologetic air hangs over the discussions of him and his work right up to the present. Critics who mustered the courage to write about a poet who had somehow strangely compelled them still felt obliged to begin essays or books with appropriate caveats: "Although Crane was alcoholic, homosexual, and a suicide . . . ." According to the method of the New Criticism (the dominant critical practice from the '40s to the '60s), knowledge of the author's life was to be excluded from discussions of his work, but in Crane's case this delicate stricture was not observed. And what trembles up from a reading of early Crane studies is the sensation that the critics consider his poems not yet accredited, and therefore best handled with tongs.

Along with Crane's biographical disadvantages, other cultural trends may account for his traditionally low critical rating. American Romanticism has been mostly out of fashion since Pound and Eliot. The Whitman revival, which began in the '50s, might have made Crane seem less marginal than before, but Whitman's rehabilitation coincided with a movement in contemporary poetry toward something called "natural speech." In fact, this new aesthetic convention also implied a number of attitudes about content and form, matters beyond the issue of the kinds of diction and syntax suitable for poetry. The "natural speech" requirement always tacitly included a demand for "natural thinking" as well: only certain subjects and stances were acceptable. The notion of authenticity, narrowly defined, became a terrible hobble for imaginative writing. The conventions of "everyday life" were proposed as the surrogate for religious, philosophical, aesthetic, and historical issues that had preoccupied poetry since Homer. No long words, no long sentences, and no long thoughts. And especially no vaulting ambition, no visionary sublime. These strictures could even become the subject, metaphoric or overt, of works written within the "natural" aesthetic convention. How many thousands of poems published since the '50s follow the same emotional contour: poet sees something grand and feels fleetingly tempted by it; then remembers that, though a poet, he or she is only human; rejects temptation and congratulates self on keeping modest prospects and preserving humanity. A useful discovery, made by nearly everyone on occasion. Still, this cannot serve as a touchstone for all that poets may be led to write. If it did, reams of Dickinson, Whitman, and Stevens would have to be scrapped, as would more than half of Crane.

Crane does not write natural speech, nor does he adopt reductivist stances in his poems. He is concerned with what Wallace Stevens called "the more than natural figure." Readers of Crane either do or do not become accustomed to his frequent recourse to verb forms with "thou," his Elizabethan locutions, rare words, and complex, Latinate syntax. If we reject all this, we should recognize the arbitrariness of our gesture. The language of poetry has always been more conservative than other modes of communication. No one imagines that Spenser and Milton wrote as their contemporaries spoke. And surely one need only compare Keats's poems with Hazlitt's prose—

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or with Keats's own letters—to recognize that his poetic language is retrospective, in fact, markedly Spenserian. If we had recordings of English live speech (as opposed to written prose) in the 1820s, the contrast would be sharper still. The mystery is that the doctrine of natural speech ever became dominant. It seems on the one hand to go along with a movement to free American art of its European cultural precedents, and on the other to serve as an emblem for a rejection of intellectual content, held to be insufficiently vitalist. Discussions of William Carlos Williams, who has been made into the champion of "natural" American idiom as the sole language for our poetry, tend to dwell on the fact that he was a physician and delivered babies. Much of Williams's poetry *is* vital and effective; but to say so does not imply that language-use more complex than his is wrong for poetry. That would be a perverse application of the democratic principle and a lamentable cultural development in a country that brought its first European explorer (as the narrator of *The Great Gatsby* tells us) "face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder."

In the end it is the self-congratulating note that grates in the natural speech mode—at least in the poems of humility achieved against enormous obstacles. Before the originality and amplitude found in a work like Crane's *The Bridge*, who *wouldn't* feel overshot? But that is an occasion for pangs and murmurs of admiration, not for smug dismissals in favor of an armchair with view of lawn and barbecue. If the sublime is out of our reach, we must acknowledge that it was not out of Crane's, and be glad that American literature can count him among our permanent poets.

THIS NEW EDITION of Crane's poetry makes 1987 a plausible year to consider as the moment when Crane no longer has to be approached with caution. The forerunners for Crane's canonization as major poet were Waldo Frank, Philip Horton, Brom Weber, R. W. B. Lewis, Harold Bloom, John Unterecker, Alan Trachtenberg, and Sherman Paul. Unterecker has written a readable and informative introduction to the new volume, and there is nothing grudging about his estimate of Crane's achievement. Instead, he takes it for granted that Crane is a major poet and discusses the tragic aspects of Crane's life with the kind of understanding that comes only to the honest partisan. Now that Crane's special qualities have been recognized as original additions to the available store of visionary possibility, and now that there is a reliable edition of all his poetry, one can predict a brisk new thriving in the scholarly appreciation of his work.

Crane's influence on contemporary poetry, meanwhile, seems already to have grown. Where aspects of Crane were once noticeable only in Allen Tate, Ben Belitt, Robert Lowell, and Elizabeth Bishop, we can now point to others of a later generation who show Crane's influence: James Merrill, Barbara Howes, John Hollander, Irving Feldman, and Allen Grossman, plus a whole new crop of poets, such as Amy Clampitt, J. D. McClatchy, Alan Williamson, George Bradley, and Henri Cole. And the new complete volume stands ready and available to future readers and writers; we can hardly claim to see now the whole of what Crane will one day be credited with having fostered.

I speak myself as one for whom Crane's example has counted. That a boy still in his teens could arrive in New York City, with no university education or any resources other than his own talent, and go on to become in a dozen years a poet of national reputation (or notoriety) has reassured many aspiring artists before now. More particularly, Crane exemplifies for me a brilliantly successful effort to fuse the rhetorical splendor of Elizabethan and Jacobean poetry with the aesthetics of French Symbolism, and with an American tradition that includes Emerson, Melville, Dickinson, and Whitman. If poets by temperament are either exclusionist or inclusionist, then Crane was certainly the latter. He felt an affinity with the popular culture of the jazz age and managed to incorporate it into his visionary rendering of contemporary America. The emphasis in his case must always be placed on the visionary and its effect on style in his poetry. As the inward eye sees (and hears), so does the tongue speak—hence Crane's oracular difficulty. His writing can be consulted over and again through its evocative qualities, but these do not offer a quick fix of meaning. The sense is one with the sound, recalling that "sound" includes, besides phonetic texture, prosodic features: the pull of syntax, lexical surprise, tone of voice, and the play of idiom. All of Crane's special gifts come to the fore in *The Bridge*, which, apart from standing as a monument to private vision, is an acute commentary on American civilization, its promise and its disappointments. Like most allegorical poems, *The*

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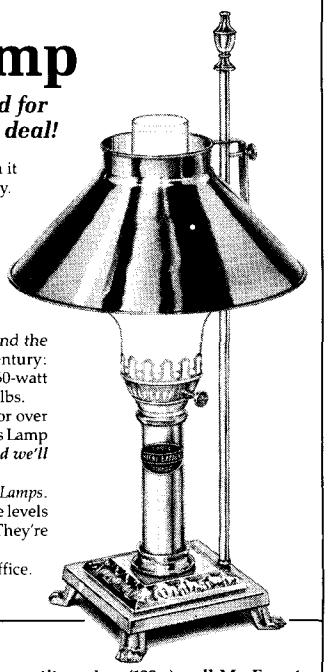

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Bridge offers readers the choice of deciding whether disappointment or promise has the final word.

This new edition, edited by Marc Simon, comes equipped with concise, useful notes, mentioning all changes, however minor, from earlier editions and justifying these on the basis of careful scrutiny of the latest available manuscripts. Composition and publication dates are given to the best of Simon's ability to determine them, and the arrangement of the poems under several headings such as "Poems Uncollected but Published by Crane," "Poems Unpublished by Crane," "Incomplete Works," and "Fragments" helps us reach reasonable conclusions about Crane's own appraisal of his legitimate oeuvre. Less scholarly editions would not have included the fragments, or even perhaps the unpublished poems. But Crane's complete poetry makes up a volume as slim as his life was short, and having at our fingertips all that remains of his writing may expedite the task of interpretation—a difficult project in Crane's case, and one long overdue. Also, some of the presumably negligible poems still have undeniable charm. I wouldn't have wanted to miss the one titled "OF AN EVENING PULLING OFF A LITTLE EXPERIENCE (with the english language)," a comically merciless parody of E. E. Cummings (as another called "What Nots?" seems to be a parody of Gertrude Stein). The fragments, too, are often useful in giving some idea of Crane's working methods in early stages of writing. He seems to begin by dipping into the stream of consciousness and letting nonsense or outrageous humor lead him to something deeper—or not, as the case may be. Some of these experiments recall the texture of Stephen Dedalus's interior monologues, gliding off into popular song, foreign words, and brusque, psychic irruption. Others sound like the beginnings of more typically Cranesque poems, fragments of works it is regrettable he never finished.

I cannot resist mentioning a doubt concerning one of the editorial emendations. In "Voyages IV," the old edition of the poem printed the word "irrefragibly," which does not exist. Simon has changed this to "irrefragably," arguing that the other possible reading, "irrefrangibly," has nothing to support it. Yet the line "All fragrance irrefrangibly, and claim" makes up a perfect pentameter, as the line with "irrefragably" substituted does not—this in a poem in which the metrical contract is quite strictly kept. Recalling, too, that the category of "brokenness" was particularly important to Crane, as was its counterpart of *un*brokenness, I would say there is enough evidence to justify at least a proposal of the variant reading. The possibility that Crane had made up a portmanteau word combining both meanings should also be allowed for, especially considering the line that follows: "Madly meeting logically in this hour . . . ."

Aside from juvenilia, the published poems not collected during Crane's lifetime include his justly famous "The Broken Tower" (first published in THE NEW REPUBLIC in 1932) and a number of less well-known but handsome poems on Caribbean subjects, some grouped under the working title "Key West, An Island Sheaf." These poems have received less attention than either *White Buildings* or *The Bridge*. Of course the 20 pages they constitute could not be expected to weigh as heavily in the balance as the two earlier completed volumes. But they are discernibly different from the rest of Crane, simpler in language and yet elusive in scope and intention. Since "Royal Palm" is dedicated to the poet's mother, it clearly asks to be read emblematically. Other poems, such as "The Air Plant" or "The Idiot," may be equally emblematic, but they resist a casual assignment of meaning. The title of the latter poem may intend some Dostoyevskian category of holy recklessness, or—who knows?—may be an emblem for the inadequate reader. Further speculation postponed until more critical study on this neglected part of Crane's work becomes available. Meanwhile, it is no trouble to appreciate—without any irritable reaching after fact or reason—lines as musical and mysterious as those in "—And Bees of Paradise":

> I had come all the way here from the sea,
> Yet met the wave again between your arms
> Where cliff and citadel—all verily
> Dissolved within a sky of beacon forms—
>
> Sea gardens lifted rainbow-wise through eyes
> I found.
>
> Yes, tall, inseparably our days
> Pass sunward. We have walked the kindled skies
> Inexorable and girded with your praise,
>
> By the dove filled, and bees of Paradise.

ALFRED CORN

Alfred Corn is the author of four books of poetry and a collection of critical essays, *The Metamorphoses of Metaphor* (Viking).

WHAT TIME DOES A CHINAMAN GO TO THE DENTIST?

The closest I've been or want to be to Beijing
is hard by these pristine drills, this spiral fountain
that asks the tourist not for yen but spit.
Thank heaven for the curtains, smutty chintz
inherited from practices ago
and that confused supply room offstage right.
They make me less uptight;
To show a little dirt's Confucian.

"Your mouth is a camera," the Chinese dentist says.
I think of Auden's "Your mother's a camera,
Your mother's the Resurrection and the Life."
He adds, "You got teeth like my wife,"
maneuvering his quivering light
upon the film clenched in my calculus.

My X-rayed roots, a gothic deus,
grin insincerely as a skeleton
or Great Wall shutterbug's appalling "Cheese!"
"You open widely please."
We've tacitly agreed:
He scrapes, I bleed.
The tiny tool works through until I'm spangled as a Gang War joss.
But Mott Street never tells you "Rinse" or "Floss."

BENJAMIN IVRY

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Did the CIA finger Sinyavsky and Daniel?

WHAT YEVGENY KNEW

BY DONALD JAMESON

YEVGENY YEVTUSHENKO, the Soviet poet with the tense face and the bravura style who excited a generation of American students with his dramatic recitations in the 1960s and early '70s, has emerged once more in the limelight of the American media, giving us a new version of how he and the other good guys have triumphed, at least for a while, over the dark forces of Brezhnevism in the Soviet Union.

"How does Yevgeny Yevtushenko spell relief? G-L-A-S-N-O-S-T," wrote R. Z. Shephard in a cautiously admiring piece in *Time* a few weeks ago. "Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's campaign of 'openness' has given him another opportunity to star in his most celebrated role . . . as the thaw poet." It was in *Time*, in fact, that "the thaw poet" made a new contribution to international understanding last February, in an essay that purported to explain what *glasnost* is all about. Yevtushenko began with an anecdote about a bomb threat at Kennedy airport, to illustrate the fear and suspicion of terror, bombs, and Russians that besets Americans these days; proceeded to suggest that Stalin's repressions after World War II were provoked by Winston Churchill; pronounced that "Soviet art is at a stage of pre-Renaissance"; and ended with a cautionary tale about the evil forces that strive to exploit *glasnost*-type openness for vicious aims. The tale was this: in 1966, according to Yevtushenko, Robert Kennedy, then a senator from New York, took the poet into the bathroom of his New York apartment, turned on the shower to protect the conversation from prying microphones, and told him, "I would like you to tell your government that the names of Sinyavsky and Daniel were given to your agents by our agents."

In early 1960s Andrei Sinyavsky, a Soviet writer and literary scholar, and his friend Yuli Daniel, a translator and teacher, lived in Moscow. Beginning in 1959 and continuing until 1964, their works—vivid short stories, biting satires, and astute criticism—were published abroad, in Europe and America. The authors hid their identities under the pseudonyms Abram Tertz and Nikolai Arzhak. They were arrested in September 1965. It is Yevtushenko's startling claim that their arrest was instigated by the American government.

Word of Sinyavsky's and Daniel's arrest first reached the West via four or five Soviet physicists who invited an American colleague visiting in Moscow to dinner. The hosts spoke little English, but conveyed as best they could to a guest who spoke no Russian that two Soviet writers, whose names became wildly garbled in the process of communication, had been arrested because of the contents of their works.

The arrest signaled the end of a remarkable period of literary tolerance that had begun under Khrushchev and lasted for almost a year after his ouster. And the trial in February 1966 remains a unique event in Soviet history: the only time when writers were brought before a court (and not merely abused, exiled, imprisoned, tried for other offenses, or killed) to answer for the content of their writings. Some of the most prominent Soviet writers of the time, including Konstantin Paustovsky and Aleksander Tvardovsky, protested the arrest. Paustovsky and five others volunteered to testify for the defense. Yevtushenko claims that he protested the trial, too, but the record doesn't list him among those who did.

I remember these events well. I was then the person most concerned with such matters at the Central Intelligence Agency. My colleagues and I viewed the phenomenon of literary and intellectual dissent in the Soviet Union after Stalin as a spontaneous and fundamental change. At the CIA, and at the State Department, we followed carefully the publication in the Soviet Union of anthologies such as *Literary Moscow* and *Pages from Tarusa*, which included authors whose works had long been suppressed

Donald Jameson worked in the CIA, where he concentrated on Soviet matters, for 22 years. He retired in 1973 and is now vice president of Research Associates International.

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and new writers whose works would earlier never have made it past the censor. Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, published in *Novy Mir*, was only one of many. At the same time, works that the Communist Party still proscribed, *Dr. Zhivago* being the most notable, reached the West. Among the manuscripts were Sinyavsky's (or Tertz's) *On Socialist Realism*, a trenchant essay on the Soviet style in life and literature, and *The Trial Begins*, a bitter surrealistic masterpiece; and Daniel's (or Arzhak's) "This Is Moscow Speaking," a brilliant satire.

By and large, American analysts in government recognized the long-term significance of the new movement. We adopted a strict policy to do nothing that might be used by Soviet authorities to impugn the dissidents' integrity. And we were convinced—I still am—that there wasn't anything useful we could have done to help them. We might have tried to get our agents in touch with them to help get manuscripts out. We might have intruded into the channels of communication they used, or asked for their views on policies and programs. We did none of these things. They knew their situation much better than we did; we would not intrude for intrusion's sake. The policy level of government concurred that we not try to reach the dissenters, although many top officials displayed a great interest in their activities and their significance.

But we did try to collect information. We knew who wrote most of the samizdat that reached the West, because most writers signed their works. But the authorship of the Tertz and Arzhak pieces remained a mystery. A defector of dubious affiliations claimed *he* was Tertz. A researcher in Moscow wrote in a journal on foreign literature that Tertz was obviously an old émigré. Speculation was intense. The original message from the physicists was, again, badly garbled, but it included something about one of the arrested writers having been the co-author of a Russian book about Picasso. One of my colleagues, an avid collector of Russian books, turned out to have a copy of a recent study of Picasso. It gave Sinyavsky as its co-author. That was what led us to Sinyavsky, whose identity was soon confirmed by other reports.

I remember, moreover, that the discovery of the Picasso book allowed us to scoop everyone else in the government. *That* is how I know that Yevtushenko's account in *Time*, with its vicious accusation against the U.S. government, is false. Our people could not have divulged the identities of Sinyavsky and Daniel to Soviet agents, for the simple reason that we did not know who they were until after they were arrested. I was in charge of all the analysts concerned with these matters; if I didn't know, nobody did. Of course I was not present at the meeting in the shower between Robert Kennedy and Yevtushenko. Perhaps it took place as Yevtushenko describes it. Still, something is clearly wrong in his account. Of that I am certain.

I REALIZE THAT the word of a retired CIA man has scant value these days. For additional proof we can turn to the record of the trial. From February 10 to 14, 1966, Sinyavsky and Daniel were tried in what passed for an open court in Moscow. They were convicted and sentenced to seven and five years in forced labor camps. Despite the authorities' attempts to restrict access to the trial, an extensive verbatim report of the proceedings was made and smuggled abroad. (Moscow's next big trial convicted the people who made the record and smuggled it out.) An English translation by Max Hayward, *On Trial*, appeared in 1966. Anyone interested in the grim condition of intellectual freedom in the Soviet Union should read it.

At the trial the two authors testified that they read their works aloud to at least 15 people. One of them, Andrei Remizov, carried one page, an addendum on the fantastic in art for *On Socialist Realism*, out to Paris on Sinyavsky's behalf. (Remizov was a librarian, apparently in Sinyavsky's institute, who was able to make a business trip to France.) Later he told the police that Sinyavsky had anti-Soviet views and testified for the prosecution at the trial. Sinyavsky was aware that the KGB had bugged his apartment and could overhear conversations—and readings—there. Sinyavsky now lives in Paris. In his recent novel/memoir, *Goodnight!*, he states that he was an object of concern to the Soviet security apparatus as far back as the 1940s, when his principal Western contact was a French student at Moscow State University. His KGB assignment was to recruit her as a spy. Clearly he was not successful; ten years later she was the chief conduit for his manuscripts to the West.

One of the people to whom both Sinyavsky and Daniel read their works, an old friend with a brilliant mind, was Sergey Khmelnitsky; and Khmelnitsky was a KGB informer. In an article he published recently in an émigré journal—he seems to live now in West Berlin—Khmelnitsky confessed that in the late 1940s he turned in two young historians to the state security forces. As a consequence they spent five or more years in forced labor camps, and were freed during Khrushchev's reign. Moreover, it appears that Khmelnitsky gave Daniel the central idea for his most important story, "This Is Moscow Speaking," and bragged about it. As far as I know, Khmelnitsky has not admitted to doing in Sinyavsky and Daniel, but a presumption of guilt may be legitimate in this case, and in Remizov's as well.

In any event, there were sufficient opportunities for the KGB to discover the identities of the writers whose works offended the authorities. By 1965 Tertz and Arzhak were known to be Sinyavsky and Daniel among the literary intelligentsia in Moscow. (There is reason to credit the story that in 1964 and 1965 the novelist Ivan Shevtsov or the poet Yevgeny Dolmatovsky went to the Communist Party's Central Committee staff to demand action against Sinyavsky's caustic attacks on their conformist work.)

WHAT conceivable reason could the American government, or any of its branches, have had for helping the Soviet Union muzzle these dissenting voices? Yevtushenko quotes Robert Kennedy lamely to the effect that the administration was worried about its reputation: "Because of Vietnam, our standing has begun to diminish both at home and abroad." According to Yevtushenko, the U.S. government thought that blowing Sinyavsky's and Daniel's cover would give the Soviets raw meat with which to make beasts of themselves, and would distract the world from Vietnam and show that the Soviet Union was nasty, too.

This piece of Machiavellianism is clumsy and absurd. In the first place, if our agents told their agents about Sinyavsky and Daniel, then their agents would have told their employer, the Soviet government, that the Americans had

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fingered the writers. Why would Kennedy have bothered to pass on information the Soviets would have had already? More to the point, in the spring of 1965, when the Americans are alleged to have provided the information to the KGB, there was no significant anti-Vietnam War protest movement. The American commitment on the ground was small, losses were few, and a short conflict was widely anticipated. 1965 was the year of Lyndon Johnson's civil rights campaign and the War on Poverty. As a cause for activists and protesters, Vietnam came later. Nor would anybody concerned with such matters have been stupid enough to think that world opinion could be diverted from years of war by a five-day trial in Moscow.

THE CIA DIDN'T finger Sinyavsky and Daniel; it didn't know who they were and it didn't have a motive. What did happen? I have talked to only a single witness to the Kennedy-Yevtushenko meeting, Albert Todd, head of the Slavic language department at Queens College, New York. Todd has been a friend, interpreter, and translator for Yevtushenko for years. He says that there were several people at the Kennedy apartment—the senator's aides and others—coming and going during the afternoon and evening. The talk among the group turned to Sinyavsky and Daniel and the trial, which had concluded only two months before. Todd remembers that "someone," not Kennedy and not Yevtushenko, said that the CIA, or American agents, had turned over the writers' identities to Soviet agents. Todd does say further that Kennedy agreed with the statement, and then took Yevtushenko into the bathroom. When they emerged, Yevtushenko looked "upset and afraid." Todd has no recollection of Vietnam being mentioned by anyone. He agreed with me that the CIA explanation sounded "unlikely."

Yevtushenko stated in *Time* that he "is parting the curtain on this episode for the first time in 21 years." But Sinyavsky's wife told a reporter from the *New Russian Word* that Yevtushenko had told her the same story in Paris eight years ago. And Vasily Aksyonov, the distinguished Russian writer now living in Washington, told the *New Russian Word* that Yevtushenko had told him the story of Kennedy turning on the shower, but he doesn't recall what Yevtushenko said about their conversation. Concerning Yevtushenko's credibility, Aksyonov said, "Well, you must always divide [what Yevtushenko says] by three, by four, by five." In any event, when Yevtushenko wrote his article for *Time*, he must have known that for Sinyavsky and Daniel the winds from the Kremlin were shifting dramatically: on February 22 of this year, a commentator in the *Moscow News*, a newspaper for the foreign community in the Soviet capital that appears in several foreign languages, observed that "[the 1965 trial] was depressing not only for the accused, but also for all thinking people whose minds had not slid down to torpor." (The article mentions Yevtushenko's report of his conversation with Kennedy.)

WHY WOULD Yevtushenko push this particular canard? Here, I think, the answer is clear. The wraps on Soviet writers are off again. Gorbachev has said that for him writers will play the role that an opposition party plays in a democracy: the critic, the exposer of scandal, the goad to action. Gorbachev can use the literary scourge to keep the ruling class and the bureaucracy in line. But when you liberate the writers and the intellectuals in a repressive society, how do you keep them from going too far, from contacting their friends abroad for ideas that go beyond Gorbachev's plans, from demanding real democracy, from defecting, or Lenin knows what? One way to restrain the writer in the era of *glasnost* is to make him or her fear the outside world by portraying it as cruel and cynical and unreliable. Say it in the right organ of the American press, and the message will be all over Moscow in a few days. Those who didn't learn the cautionary lesson from Yevtushenko in *Time* must have learned it from that article in the *Moscow News*, which noted that "our enemies need an unfree Soviet Union. They need a sleeping giant kept dormant by energetic and 'patriotic' measures, undertaken in the name of democracy [by the security forces and the Party] in response to provocations by foreign special services."

Speaking of special services: about 20 years ago I used to know the name of the KGB general who looked after Yevtushenko, who had little talks with him, kept him out of trouble, asked little favors once in a while. I've forgotten the name now. Anyway that general has probably been replaced by another. But I'll bet his successor and the poet still have those little talks. □

TRB, *from page 4*

who has to be begged to accept power and hands it back at the first opportunity. But these men are not generals, they are professional politicians. If political power doesn't interest them, what are they in it for? As for modesty, how modest can a successful politician actually be? It's a modesty of awfully fine calibration that says, I'm worthy of being senator or governor, but not of being president.

What's more, *someone* is going to be the Democratic nominee for president and *someone* is going to be sworn in 19 months from now. It's swell to be humbled by the awesome responsibilities of the presidency in the abstract. But does Bill Bradley really feel humble in comparison to Joe Biden or Dick Gephardt? Does Mario Cuomo really feel morally unworthy of standing in the shoes of Bob Dole or George Bush? That much humility is unnecessary.

There's no doubt that running for president requires an appalling sacrifice of time, energy, dignity, family life, and possibly sanity. But refusing to make this sacrifice is hardly a qualification for having the prize handed to you on a platter, or a credit to be saved in case you change your mind in the future. After the flaccid patriotism of the Reagan years, in which Americans were called upon to accept tax cuts and cheap military victories for the good of their country, the citizenry is ready for a sterner call to idealism and even sacrifice to preserve the promise of American life. Bill Bradley and Mario Cuomo are just the sort of leaders who could make this call convincing. But will people respond to such a challenge from someone who won't sacrifice his dignity for his values, or who is too absorbed listening to the tick-tock of his "internal clock" to notice that a historic opportunity is slipping away?

Democratic voters need to send a message to all the shrinking violets, but especially to Bill Bradley. Look, big fella: don't run if you don't want to. But don't come looking for us when you decide that you are ready. We're ready now.

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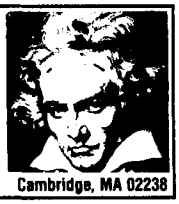

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Bad Ideas

NOW THAT the entire postwar generation is safely out of school (the last baby boomer graduates from law school this month) and is in a position to tell its children what they ought to know, Great Books are coming back. An older generation is eager to lead the way: the *New York Times* recently asked a dozen notables what they would change about their education if they could; two unlikely soulmates well out of danger of ever having to write another term paper, William Bennett and Norman Mailer (college major: aviation engineering), said they would take Greek. The latest refinement on the Great Books theory of education is something that might be called the Great Words theory. Its chief exponent is E. D. Hirsch Jr., whose *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* appeared this spring. The book's argument—that "reading skills" are an empty acquirement if there is no common body of knowledge to accompany them—is buttressed by some solemn references to the "discoveries" of recent research on cognition. We are introduced, for instance, to "one of the sharpest critical thinkers of our day, Dr. Hilary Putnam, a Harvard philosopher," who observes: "Significant communication requires that people know something of what they are talking about." Noted, and thanks. But the special feature is a list of 5,000 or so words and phrases, from "abbreviation" to "Zurich," that are said to constitute what every culturally literate American should know, and that Hirsch proposes be inscribed on the floppy-disks *rasae* of all elementary school children.

GROWN-UPS ARE more likely to be engaged by the Hirsch 5,000 than children are, since you can create a mildly diverting after-dinner entertainment by asking people to use any four consecutive items in a single sentence (e.g., gerund/gestalt psychology/Gestapo/Gesundheit). And anyone who is not being graded on his performance will enjoy pitting his knowledge against that of Hirsch's hypothetical literate eighth-grader. I did all right for a Spockie, giving myself the benefit of the doubt on a few scientific terms ("iceberg," yes; "Iceland," yes; "id, the," yes indeed; "Idaho," got it; "ideal gas," hmm—I'm sure I'd know it in a sentence). Until I got to "Pierce, Charles Sanders," between "pie in the sky" and "Pietà (image)." I'd heard of Charles Sanders Peirce, of course, author of "How To Make Our Ideas Clear" (1878) and other works well known to literacy fans; but "Pierce" was a stumper.

THE INTRIGUING THING about The List—apart from the unusually complete collection it offers of very ripe, very WASPy bromides—"good man is hard to find, A"; "proof of the pudding is in the eating, The"; "lock the stable door after the horse is stolen, Don't"—is that it tries to prescribe content without prescribing values. Somehow children are to be taught this information without being told what to think about it. I don't quite see how that is supposed to work. George Washington's Oedipal business with his father's cherry tree is Hirsch's favorite example of a generally shared piece of information that should be known simply because it has been known. But it has been known because it reinforces a myth about the superhumanity of the Founding Fathers, and therefore teaches a particular, rather nationalistic political value. Sure, adults know the story is a myth; but try explaining that to a second-grader. Stories like the cherry tree are powerful sources of belief precisely because they're just stories, and are therefore immune from the charge of falsehood. As W. B. Yeats (right before "Yellow peril") once said, "You can refute Hegel but not . . . the Song of Sixpence."

THE PROBLEM WITH the Great Words theory is that it leads inexorably onward to the Great Books theory. Once you accept the notion that there are certain cultural bytes everyone should be programmed with (just to be able to communicate), it's easy to accept the further notion that there are certain books everyone ought to read (just to be able to understand the culture)—which in turn runs into the notion that there are certain ideas everyone ought to have (just to be able to get along with everyone else). The cornerstone of the Great Books theory is the test-of-time argument: these books have pleased many and pleased long, so they will please you. As long as the "you" remains pretty much constant, this works fine. The problem arises with the arrival of a new "you." Columbia College is now celebrating the 50th anniversary of its Humanities A course, in which almost the same list of classics from Homer to Goethe has been taught to freshmen since 1937. There's nothing wrong with the books, of course; but books are not improved by being cast in bronze—if only because they make every book not so apotheosized look a little cheaper. "The Columbia faculty doesn't beat about the bush on the question of whether there are things that an educated person should know," former Dean Peter Pouncey told the *Times*. "They say, 'Yes, there are things that an educated college graduate should read. We will tell you what they are, and then we will read them with you.' " But the Columbia faculty is apparently just as immune to doubt when it decides to change its mind. It seems that when women were admitted to the college in 1983, it was suddenly discovered that there had never been a single work by a woman on the list. No problem: the Columbia faculty that had told students for 46 years that they were reading "the things an educated person should know" found a few more things educated people should know, and stuck Sappho and Jane Austen into the pantheon. Now, says the *Times*, "faculty members have [begun] exploring ways of introducing minority writers and 'third world viewpoints' into the course." One can guess exactly how this will be managed: there will be a guest spot on the list, to be filled by a different "minority" work each year. That way no one will make the mistake of confusing *Invisible Man* with a Great Book.

RONALD REAGAN SAYS he understood the Boland amendment not to apply to the National Security Council. His assistant secretary of state for Inter-American Affairs, Elliott Abrams, says he assumed the Boland amendment applied to everybody. Why the confusion? The administration's official hermeneutics, which the attorney general has spent years promoting, is that the meaning of a legal document is what its author intended. Edward Boland is around; if the administration couldn't figure out what his amendment meant, why didn't they give him a call? That's the problem with originalist theories of interpretation: the results they produce are so much more satisfactory when the author is someone you can't reach on the phone. Like James Madison.

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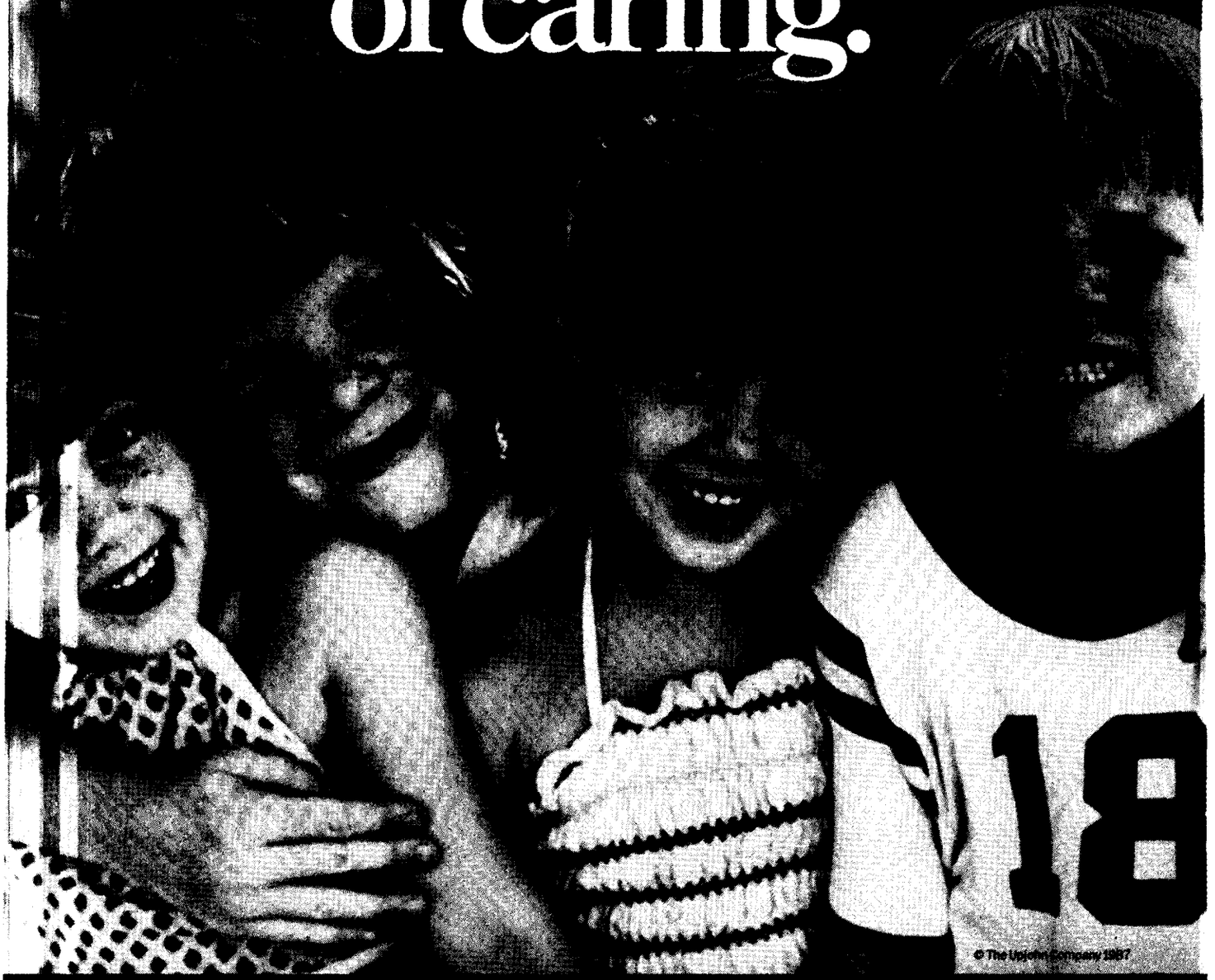

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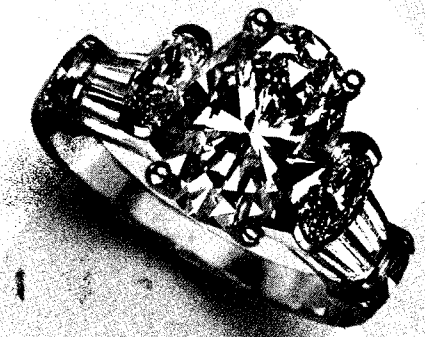

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